



CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND EXPERIENCES OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS IN PEACE BUILDING PROCESSES

SPACES OF PEACE

Edited by
Cuma iek

Translation
Aye Grr


DIYARBAKIR INSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL
AND SOCIAL RESEARCH

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**Spaces of Peace:
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The opinions in the study may not coincide with the views of DİSA and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Turkey Office.

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He is one of the founders of Peace Foundation, as well as a board member of DİSA since 2018. Lastly, his book “The Process: The Kurdish Conflict and the Search for Solution” (İletişim Publishing) was published in 2018.

Vivet Alevi, was born and raised in Turkey. She completed her higher education at the Berlin Fine Arts University, Visual Communication Department in Germany. She started to understand the idea and concept of Nonviolent Communication in 1999 while she was working as a social pedagogue. She has been sharing her experiences as a certified trainer from CNVC (The Center for Nonviolent Communication) since 2004. Since 2005, she has travelled regularly to Turkey in order to promote Nonviolent Communication. She is the founding president of the Nonviolent Communication Association (www.siddetsiziletisim.org), founded in Istanbul in 2013.

Reha Ruhavioğlu, lives in Diyarbakır. He academically studies Islamic civil society, Islamic media and media discourse; politically he is interested in Islamic politics, the Kurdish issue and conflict resolution. He worked in various management levels of MAZLUMDER Diyarbakır and Central Office. He is one of the founding members of Hak İnisyatifi (Rights Initiative) established by the branches of MAZLUMDER closed by the center, he is also Diyarbakır representative of Hal İnisyatifi. He is one of the founders of Rawest Research. He is a member of the editorial board of the literature and culture magazine *yokuş yol'a*, which is based in Diyarbakır. He is Naz's husband and the father of Avzem Şûle and Ali Mîrza.

Tarik Çelenk, was born in 1961, in Erzurum. He graduated from ITU Faculty of Electrical Engineering in 1982. The following year he was appointed to the Naval Forces Command. He resigned in 1998 when he was a major. He became a board member of İSKİ between 2002-2004. Between 2005-2011,

he took part as a coordinator in Eco-Politics studies, of which he was the founding president. Between 2013-2015, he took part in the Committee of Wise Men formed during the Solution Process. He is a TV commentator. He wrote a book named the Turkish Right's Thought Atlas. In 2018, he founded Vakıfbank Culture Publications and became the chief editor.

Özlem Öztürk, was born in 1973 in Halfeti, Şanlıurfa. She studied violence against women and gender between 1995-2005. Since 1995, she has taught in many different locations in the Southeast and East Anatolia regions. She was influenced by the stories of her students hurt by mine and conflict wastes, and working on these issues in 2005. She took part in the establishment of the Social Awareness and Anti-Violence Association (DUY-DER) with a group of her friends in 2008. Since 2008, she is working to prevent the harm of mines and conflict waste on children and civilians. DUY-DER has reached more than 100,000 children and gave risk training about mines and conflict waste during the Mines and Conflict Waste Education Project for Children; they continue working with a perspective advocating that the mine problem at the national level is a human rights issue.

Öztürk Türkođan, works as a lawyer in the field of human rights. In 2008, he became the chairman of the Human Rights Association, of which he has been a member of the central board of directors since 2002. He has been the spokesman of Turkey Coalition for the International Criminal Court (UCMK) for a long time. He has also been a board member of the Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP) since 2008. He took part in the Wise Persons Delegation that was formed for the Solution Process in 2013 and has been providing the legal counseling for the Health and Social Service Workers Union (SES) for more than twenty years.

Şah İsmail Bedirhanođlu, was born in 1961 in Diyarbakır. He graduated from Dicle University, Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish Language Teaching. He started his professional life working in the pharmaceutical and medical market. He has taken active roles in various NGOs of the business circle since 1994. He assumed the administration and chairmanship of Diyarbakır Industrialists and Businessmen Association (DİSİAD), Southeast Industrialists and Businessmen Association (GÜNSİAD) and East-Southeast Industrialists and Business People Associations Federation (DOGÜNSİFED). He is a board member of DİSA and chairman of DOGÜNSİFED high advisory board.

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Vahap Coşkun, completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at Dicle University and his PhD at Ankara University. He has published books as well as many articles in newspapers and magazines about human rights and democracy issues, politics in Turkey and the Kurdish issue. He continues his academic studies at Dicle University, Faculty of Law. He is among the founders of DİSA and the chairman of the board since 2018.

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INTRODUCTION

Cuma Çiçek

The Kurdish issue has shifted from the ground of dialogue and negotiation to the ground of violence since July 2015. The 2013-2015 Resolution Process, which started after the 1999-2004 İmralı Process and the 2008-2011 Oslo Process, has also failed.¹ The efforts of finding a solution to the Kurdish issue through dialogue and negotiation were unsuccessful. The conflicts have started again and these conflicts were considerably different than the previous ones.

There have been three important changes in the nature of the conflicts that started after the June 7, 2015 elections. The first one is the expansion of the conflicts: conflicts previously concentrated in rural areas have expanded to urban areas. Thousands of people lost their lives between 350, 000 and 500, 000 people were displaced² during the urban clashes which took place between August 2015 and April 2016. The majority of those displaced were from the district centers of cities such as Diyarbakır, Mardin, Şırnak and Hakkari.³

The second change to note is the clashes have spread beyond the Turkish border. Clashes occurring beyond the border have become one of the main dynamics determining the Kurdish issue in Turkey. As a result of the Kurdish conflict, cross-border operations against members of the Kurdistan Workers

1 For a more detailed analysis of the Kurdish Conflict, see: Cuma Çiçek, *Süreç: Kürt Çatışması ve Çözüm Arayışları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018).

2 According to the data of the Human Rights Association, 3,310 people lost their lives during armed conflicts between 2015-2018 (See: www.ihd.org.tr, access date: 15.10.2019). According to the data of Uppsala University Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the total loss of life is 3,574 (See: <https://ucdp.uu.se/conflict/354>, access date: 15.10.2019). According to the data from the International Crisis Group, total casualties between July 2015 and October 4, 2019 is 4,686 (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/tr/content/grafik-ve-haritalarla-turkiyedeki-pkk-catismasi>, access date: 10/15/2019).

3 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report on the human rights situation in South-East Turkey - July 2015 to December 2016*, February 2017, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/OHCHR_South-East_TurkeyReport_10March2017.pdf, access date: 15.10.2019.

Party / Kurdistan Communities Union (PKK/KCK) and military camps in the Iraq Kurdistan Region began in the 1980s and still continue. However, in 2011, starting with the civil war in Syria, Turkey's Kurdish issue and the clashes caused by it began to be largely based in Syria. The military interventions of Turkey to Jarabulus, al-Bab and Efrîn located in northern Syria and the clashes ongoing for years are positioning to become permanent. Lastly, the conflicts starting in October 2019 -after the entry of the Turkish army to Rojava, Syria's Kurdish region- further show that the space of Kurdish clashes crossed beyond the border.

Finally, the Kurdish issue and the Kurdish conflict have shifted to an international level that cannot be compared with the past. The Kurdish issue was both an interstate and an international problem, considering the Kurdish issue does not only exist in Turkey, but also in Syria, Iraq and Iran. Secondly, international treaties and the confirmation of international actors have substantially constructed the current position of the Kurds. However, with the Syrian crisis, the international visibility of the issue and the level of interest to it gained a different dimension. After the attack of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) against Kobani, the international reactions and the global sympathy towards the Kurds have raised. After the Turkish military intervention to Rojava, the US, EU and the Arab League member states' reaction isolated Turkey on this issue. This situation shows that the Kurdish issue has shifted to a different ground on the international level.

Considering these changes in the formation of the Kurdish issue and the Kurdish conflict, it can be argued that a solution based on dialogue and negotiation has become more difficult today. The Kurdish issue was once largely an internal problem and there were possible solutions on this ground until the 2013-2015 Solution Process, though today it has become a complicated case involving different geographies, various actors and a multilayered structure.

There is a second aspect as important as the geographical expansion of the Kurdish issue and the increase of its levels and actors: In Turkey, the social division between "Kurdish street / neighborhood" and "Turkish street / neighborhood" has deepened remarkably. The reflection of Turkey's military intervention in Rojava between Turks and Kurds reveals this situation in all its nakedness. On the one hand, under the leadership of AK Party government, all opposition parties like the Nationalist Movement Party, the Republican People's Party and the İyi Parti took part in the same front. In the 23 June 2018 elections, the total representation rate of these four parties was 86.3%. Besides, HDP remained alone in the parliament and the Kurdish streets were

kept silenced. Despite the silence of the Kurdish neighborhood in Turkey, almost all the Kurdish political parties in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, that have in the past clashed with each other and shed blood mutually, have met around Rojava and all around the world Kurds were on the streets for demonstration.

The table summarized above does not trivialize the efforts about peace building and reconciliation about the Kurdish issue, but rather makes it much more necessary. It shows the high prices the society will pay if we cannot prevent it. Only four or five years ago, the clashes ended entirely; there appeared an opportunity to remove the ground of violence in the Kurdish issue via strengthening the processes of democratization, cultural pluralism, and decentralization. The conflicts started again as a result of not taking advantage of this opportunity and caused losses and destructions incomparable with the past. Today, we confront a political picture and social rift gestating a new conflict ground that will last for decades.

Cases occurring during conflict resolution and social peace building at different times and places reveal that intrastate identity-based territorial conflicts, like the Kurdish conflict, have created deep social rifts. With a history of conflict spanning decades, social relations are fundamentally destroyed in cases where ethnic/national relations are based on inequality and power relations. Furthermore, deep socioeconomic inequalities prevail, the level of democracy is low and the mediums of participation to politics is limited, conflict is concentrated in a certain region, loss of life is high and forced displacement is common. Building a true social peace that will eliminate the social divisions requires the re-establishment of the relevant relations.

The construction of a peace house is possible with spaces of reconciliation. The spaces of reconciliation can neither be created by only ending the conflicts, nor is it something that actors in conflict can do alone. Moreover, political actors cannot do such a social construction alone. Contrary to popular belief, conflicts do not occur only among the conflicting parties. These conflicts destroy social relations in many economic, social, cultural, administrative, spatial and psychological areas and create new social relations, "poisoned" by hatred and hostility generated by conflicts, and sub-systems shaped by these relations.

Moving beyond nonviolence, going beyond politics, restoring social relations requires a multi-layered, multi-actor and multi-dimensional social mobilization from micro scale to macro scale. Civil society actors can play a key role

in such a mobilization. They can contribute not only to the re-establishment of relations in the social field, but also to the transformation of the political arena.

Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, working on the role of NGOs in building social reconciliation, highlight the seven roles of civil society organizations: (1) protection of citizens, (2) monitoring and accountability, (3) advocacy and public communication, (4) socializing in-group and a culture of peace, (5) social cohesion sensitive to conflict, (6) mediation and facilitation, and (7) providing direct service.

This study consists of the discussions in the program titled “The Role of NGOs in Conflict Resolution and Social Peace building”, in which the experiences of civil society actors about the subject are shared within the frame of “DİSA: Peace School.” The latter is planned to have a theoretical framework developed by Paffenholz and Spurk.

In the first part, Cuma Çiçek draws a theoretical framework on the role of civil society actors in conflict resolution and social peace building. In this context, after discussing the conflict processes and peace treaties in the world with numeric data, he discusses the basic parameters and dynamics that determine the formation of territorial conflicts based on intrastate identity, such as the Kurdish issue. In this regard, he also analyzes the experiences in Indonesia/Aceh and Philippines/Bangsamoro to give a reference. He refers the conceptual frameworks developed by Johan Galtung and John Paul Lederach, who are prominent in peace studies, to map conflict resolution and social peace building studies. He discusses the positions of civil society actors within multiple layers of negotiation and actors. The chapter ends with a discussion, in addition to the theoretical ones, on the concrete roles civil society actors can play in peace building and how they can function. The discussion is based on the experiences of Colombia, Philippines and Northern Ireland.

In the second part, Vivet Alevi shares the “Nonviolent Communication” developed by Marshall B. Rosenberg within the scope of the function of civil society actors in terms of “in-group socialization and peace culture.” Alevi, discusses her experiences gained during the studies she carried out, considering the group-based conflicts such as the Kurdish issue, within the Center for Nonviolent Communication. She puts forth another communication, which is beyond the right/wrong, good/bad centered communication style, by which we have been absorbed in daily life, ignoring both our own needs and the needs of others, and focusing on competition and judgment. Compassion is

a part of our nature and violence is learned. By a value-free observation, we can establish “nonviolent communication” by directly recognizing the emotions in our hearts, expressing our needs that express our values and yearnings, expressing our requests in a clear and positive language of action. As Vivet Alevi and her friends say: “Nonviolent Communication is the search for understanding all parties in the conflict wholeheartedly and with empathy, it is also creating a ground for cooperation based on such a connection and producing common solutions where everyone’s needs are considered.” The chapter provides a communication-centered discussion about transforming conflicts, restoring our relationships and building the path of peace, and suggests a new perspective in this area that should be taken into account.

In the third part, Reha Ruhavioğlu discusses his experiences of Islamic-based human rights in the Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed and in the Rights Initiative in terms of “public communication and advocacy.” Ruhavioğlu shares the conflicts and compromises generated by the struggle of human rights in the social arena and fields of Islam, nationalism and the Kurdish issue, as well as the studies carried out by Rights Initiative and the tradition it inherited to this day. This sharing is surely not just a listing of what has been done. He talks about the good experiences that have successful results in the struggle for rights but also the works that have remained inconclusive or do not provide the expected effects. He examines the experiences gained in the struggle for human rights with their successes and failures in an expanding field from education in mother language to the return of child fighters, and examines the dynamics that provide success and mistakes and deficiencies that lead to failure.

In the fourth part, Tarık Çelenk presents what civil society actors can do in the field of “social togetherness sensitive to conflict,” through his experience in Eco-Politics. He shows the transforming power of the encounter and contact of the conflicting groups or social actors polarized around them with examples. In his experience of eco-politics, where there is not a similar one in Turkey, Çelenk does not only share the Kurdish issue in Turkey, but also from Cyprus and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Here he shares the unusual studies about reconstruction of social cohesion in divided societies. The experience of bringing together a veteran and a PKK member, Turkish nationalist intellectuals and Kurdish political figures can be evaluated as an example of “nonviolent communication.” The experience of Eco-Politics can be considered as an effort to leave aside competition and judgment, to understand by observing the other without prejudice, to discover mutual feelings and needs, and to find new and requirements driven solutions. Vamık Volkan is considered

globally with his studies on political psychology, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. His eco-political experience, which is also an important knowledge supported by methodology, draws attention to the studies which have not been able to be carried out during the solution and peace building process.

In the fifth part, Özlem Öztürk talks about what civil society can do about “protecting citizens from conflicts” through the experience of the Social Awareness and Anti-Violence Association (DUY-DER). Öztürk’s experience under the umbrella of DUY-DER - which started from the first contacts a teacher made with mine-victim students and turned into a work that touched about a hundred thousand children - is a good example of a journey that shows what civil society can do despite all borders. The aforementioned experience reveals in detail that the problem of mine and conflict wastes, which are rather discussed under headings such as security problems and the inability to use fertile land, should be handled as a problem that violates the fundamental human right to life. It shows how the problem of mine and conflict wastes dating back years, has changed nature especially in the 1990s with the increasing conflicts arising from the Kurdish issue. Öztürk describes the mine and conflict waste problem as an issue expanding from a border problem to a question of the inner regions reaching Dersim. Her ideas are based on both official reports and field studies performed at international and local levels. She shares with us the stories of DUY-DER that wandered village-to-village, school-to-school and touched nearly a hundred thousand children.

In the sixth part, Öztürk Türkdoğan discusses the support of civil society regarding “monitoring and accountability” through his experiences at the Human Rights Association (İHD). He shares the story of a human rights movement that has been initiated by a group against torture and serious human rights violations; these violations had become widespread after the 1980 Coup. The experience of İHD, first of all, shows us the importance of generating a memory on the issue not only at the local level but also at the international level by monitoring and reporting the human rights struggle. We owe this memory - consisted of human rights violations in Turkey and the Kurdish issue that holds a significant place in the struggle against these violations - significantly to İHD. The İHD experience also includes how monitoring and accountability practices in conflict resolution and social peace building work intertwine with different functions such as: public communication; advocacy at local, national and international levels; evaluation of international mechanisms; combating impunity; protecting citizens; mediation and showing the necessity of bridging its functions.

In the seventh chapter, Şah İsmail Bedirhanoğlu focuses on the “mediating and facilitating” role of civil society actors in conflict resolution and peace building. Bedirhanoğlu, a member of the Contact and Dialogue Group that has been active before and after Solution Process (2013-2015), evaluates the mediation and facilitation efforts to solve Turkey’s Kurdish conflict, by taking into consideration the experiences in Colombia and Northern Ireland. He shares the difficulties of this area in Turkey through his personal experience. Unlike the 1999-2004 İmralı Process, which was closed to the public, and the 2008-2011 Oslo Process, which was carried out with the mediation and facilitation of an international group/institution, a direct dialogue was established between the government and the organization during the Solution Process (2013-2015). In this process, still, the Contact and Dialogue Group consisting of intellectuals from different political views, opinion leaders and representatives of non-governmental organizations was formed. Bedirhanoğlu, shares both this experience, which was not reflected to public and the international examples by taking into consideration the past dialogue processes in Turkey. He, sincerely, puts forward the critical mistakes of the said committee as well as its contributions to the Solution Process.

In the last chapter, Metin Bakkalcı tells the treatment and rehabilitation program he carried out for Turkey Human Rights Foundation (THİV). The program concerned the role of civil society in “direct service delivery” to individuals and groups who are affected negatively from the conflicts. This study supports people who both suffer the ongoing social trauma from torture and serious human rights violations. As Bakkalcı underlines, the treatment and rehabilitation support that THİV keeps with “the magnificent association of the academic depth and the activist spirit” is not only limited to a service delivery. THİV, which manages the treatment and rehabilitation processes considering the physical, mental, social and political integrity of people, provides a holistic and multidimensional support for people who are subjected to rights violations, including access to the truth and justice, regaining rights, compensation, combating impunity and dealing with ongoing social trauma. THİV experience is an impressive and promising example of how civil society actors can act in a multifunctional way simultaneously and in relation with each other in the process of conflict resolution and social peace building.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROLE OF NGOS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL PEACE: A THEORETICAL FRAME

Cuma Çiçek

My presentation will be under three main topics. First, I will roughly depict the picture of this issue in the world, with the inclusion of data, and secondly, I will draw a general map to grasp the role of civil society in conflict resolution and social peace building. What is conflict resolution and social peace building? This question will be mapped and answered. In the last part, I will draw a frame showing the location and the role about concrete issues of NGOs in this map.

CONFLICTS AND SOCIAL PEACE BUILDING IN THE WORLD

Let me start with the first one. This is important because in Turkey, generally, we have a reading “unique to us.” There is a general tendency that “we are like us, we have no similar.” In most cases, we prefer to keep a little away from the knowledge and the experience of the world on the excuse of Turkey’s unique conditions and circumstances. But in fact, we are full of knowledge - unfortunately not a very good knowledge - on this subject. This is not an issue specific to us. Nearly 422 conflict cases have occurred in the world since 1816, in 122 countries, across almost all the continents.

Therefore, if you are interested in the issue, at first I would like you to know that this is not unique to us, and there are very similar cases in many parts of the world. There is an extensive literature on this. Turkish and Kurdish resources are unfortunately limited in this sense. But if you have a little interest in foreign languages, if you have a little colloquial language, I can tell you that you have large information and there is a digital school in conflict resolution and peace building in the world. Surely, you may have some criticisms about those who work solely on the issue with numbers. I also have but sometimes they suggest a good frame to see the picture roughly.

One of them is *The Correlation of War Project*, an international academic team conducts the work, and it has been going on since 1969. They have digitized

and kept the data of nine to ten variables for approximately all major conflicts which occurred between 1806-2007. It is not a very interactive map, but if you are a good with Excel, you have a chance of access to the information of most countries.

Another one is the *Uppsala Conflict Data Program* at Uppsala University. This is a fairly simple program, an accessible interactive map. When you click on any country, you can see all the conflict cases in that country. There is brief information including: the case, the time of it, the main issue, the loss of life and many similar data you can find etc. Here, they keep a kind of numeric genealogy of the cases that occurred between 1945-2011. This has a second feature; there is also a database of peace treaties, not only the results of conflicts. They analyzed 196 treaties on peace signed between 1975-2011.

I will soon share some data as an example. I don't want to go through its content too much. What I want to show you here is: this case is not unique to us and there are a lot of experiences. Since the 1950s, there have been various studies in universities on conflict resolution, social peace building, peace studies, and a huge literature and knowledge have been formed.

Although we have an issue that has affected our country to this extent and affects our daily life - almost every day and every hour - as you know, even today there is a trustee experience in Diyarbakır, we did not make use of this knowledge in Turkey, unfortunately. We can ask important questions like why we have not benefited from so many experiences or what the universities do about the issue.

If you examine these two databases, you have the chance to obtain much information. For example, a classification has been made about the types of these conflicts. I just want you to look at the titles. Don't get buried in details. What are the types of these conflicts? Is it interstate or intrastate? Is it identity based or territorial? Are the revolts targeting the whole country and aiming to change the political system? So you have a chance to go to the classification of conflict types. You can see the regional distribution. It has existed both since 1816 and the Second World War. When you look at the distribution since the Second World War, you see that it is mostly concentrated in Asia and Africa.

There are two main types of intrastate conflicts. There are riots that aim to change the regime, for example, to establish a communist government or to establish an Islamic government, or conflicts that aim to change the political regime in a particular region of a country or to join the regime.

You have the chance to find data about how the conflicts end. There are various types such as military victory of states, military victory of the insurgents, defeat of neither side, reconciliation or low intensity of the continuing conflict or stalemate.

You can see the casualties. What is the average casualty in such cases? States, in average, have about eight thousand casualties in such cases. The rebels have around eighteen thousand.

I have presented just a few examples. You can access a lot of data like this. At least you can get an opinion on how this is dealt in the world. There are also theories based on this.

To give an example, I read two articles. Is there a relationship between the way conflicts end and their duration? One article compared ninety cases; the other one, one hundred and twenty cases to see if there was a correlation between the duration of the conflict and the way it ended. There were purely numerical results, regardless of the course of the conflict. Someone said, for example: The possibility for the rebels to win is in the first five years while it is the first seven years for the state. After seven years, it's probably either a permanent war or a stalemate situation or a negotiated solution. In short, studies including academic works are based entirely on these numerical data that have created a remarkable accumulation.

Especially in the second study, there is a database on peace treaties. A total of 196 treaty texts from four continents were examined in terms of the common issues that emerged there. There were six issues I highlighted. In most of the treaties, there is an issue of weapons and violence. You can make numerical analysis on how this is solved. For example, you can see in various titles, how many cases the ceasefire and hostilities have been ended, in how many cases we see the establishment of a new army or the reform of the army and the police and in how many cases the rebels are disarmed. In summary, you can see the general picture of the world through the issue of weapons and violence.

Another prominent issue is the government. There are data on how administrative and political management issues have been resolved in such cases, which one stands out in how many cases. You have the opportunity to see the situation of the case and how it ended, especially in territorial cases. This resembles the Kurdish issue, which aims to transform the administrative and political structure in a certain region of the country or the allegations about the latter.

Another important point is justice. How has justice been secured in such cases and by which means, how is the distribution? There is various data on these issues.

There is also a databank regarding the application. How were these implemented? Did they establish commissions? Here, there is data such as the case of a negotiation agenda, the existence of a peacekeeping operation force, whether there is continuity or not. You can also find data about the failures. How many cases were there where conflict reoccurred within five years after the peace treaty? The problem does not end just because a treaty is signed. In most cases, similar or slightly differentiated conflicts can arise within five years.

You can find some information on both the formation of conflicts and possible peace treaties in such databanks. It is valuable to look at it; if you go into details you can find many data on the Kurdish issue. According to two researches, among ninety to one hundred cases, the general tendency is that the rebels gain victory within the first five years; if they don't, the possibility of a military victory is very weak. For states, this period is five or seven years. The general average of the cases says that after seven or ten years, there is no armed solution to these conflicts, also for the states.

Based on this data, maybe you can read this area. You can check the time and the casualties. There are also various theories about casualties. There are various readings stating that the solution will become more difficult with the increase of the casualties. There are various readings stating that the solution will get harder if the casualties increase. There are theories claiming that the increase in casualties makes it more difficult to build peace, because the "community that has to make peace with its enemy" grows. There are also theses that argue the opposite, actually saying that an extensive loss makes the need for peace more visible and creates a ground for peace. But all these schools work on numerical data, as I have mentioned.

DYNAMICS THAT DETERMINE THE FORMATION OF THE INTRASTATE CONFLICTS

There are also studies that approach the issue qualitatively. I made a classification. In short, we can discuss the intrastate (in a certain region of a certain state; this can be based on identity or political) territorial conflicts. In English literature they call it exactly intrastate identity-based territorial conflict. What are the main dynamics that are prominent in such conflicts?

There is an important question about the basic parameters that determine the formation, embodiment and the way of ending such conflicts, and there are studies conducted around this question.

There are many variables, but there were three main groups that took my attention. One of them is, telling roughly, the cross-border or local dynamics and international dynamics. We can analyze this in two ways. The literature says that the shape of the conflict (its formation and ending) you are dealing with does not only depend on you. First of all it depends on your neighbors. Who are your neighbors? Do your neighbors have a conflict case or not? Are there ties such as identity or religious bonds between the people of your country or the people of that conflict zone and the people in the neighborhood? What is happening in the neighborhood determines the formation of your conflict. So you have to check it too.

Another factor is “international powers.” What is the position of the imperial powers that direct world politics in the relevant conflict? There is a huge study especially referring to the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. The study is based on a discussion whether there is a difference in the formation of these cases between the pre-Soviet and pre-collapse periods, and the information generated from it. They argue that the position of the imperial states, or the grand states that have the power to shape regional politics, is an issue that directly determines the formation of your conflict.

And another one is a parameter group that I prefer to formulate as “domestic structural dynamics.” These are structural issues that actors cannot change in the short term; for example, the level of socio-economic development in your country. There is also a thesis that says: “As poverty increases, the potential for conflicts to arise and to increase multiplies.” There is a relationship between people interested in democracy and their mechanisms of participation to politics in unarmed ways, its levels and the appearance, formation and the cessation of these conflicts.

What is the type of the conflict? In other words, do these conflicts across the country anticipate overthrowing the government or changing the political regime, or are they focused on identity-based conflicts in a particular region? This identity can be religious or ethnic. There is a general tendency, which argues that the identity-based conflicts are more difficult to resolve. These conflicts last longer in these cases; numerical data confirm this. The main argument at this point is that the mobilization ability of the rebels in a given area strengthens the ability to sustain the conflict. Therefore, there are those

who say: “In identity-based conflicts, the cases take a longer time because the insurgents have a high chance of positioning and getting logistical support within a dense population.”

“Ethnic, national domination” or “composition” - What is the ethnical composition of the country? You can use different concepts such as ethnicity, nation, nationality, but what is, in fact, the identity-based social configuration and what are the power relations between them? This is, again, a dynamic that determines the formation of the conflicts.

Is “conflict area” regional or countrywide? In other words, what is the physical area of the conflict? Do the rebels engage in a conflict by focusing on their own regions, or are they following a strategy that spreads the conflict throughout the country. This is a dynamic that again affects conflict.

“Physical features of the conflict area” is another issue. As the amount of forested, mountainous areas and the density of border regions increase in the geographical area, the possibility of the conflict to continue for longer increases as the mobilization ability of the rebels increases.

“The size of the population and diaspora” - There is a general opinion that conflicts last longer, especially in the cases of large population, and that large diaspora have a negative impact on such cases of conflict.

In short, these are the dynamics that shape the issue. I talked about the whole picture. It explains the whole with every detail. When we come to the point soon, we will see that these are not easy topics.

Finally, we can talk about “actor-based dynamics,” under which we can talk about dynamics that are more dependent on actors, such as preferences, strategies, principles, ideologies, and political desires of the actors. There are two remarkable issues here. One is the cost of the conflicts. Loss of life and forced migration are the two prominent subheadings. There is a direct relationship between the number of casualties and the formation of the conflict. There is also a direct relationship among the forced migration, the process of displacement and the formation of such cases.

“State capacity” is a concept mainly referring to the military and armed capacity of the state. So what is the power or quantitative size of the army? How big is the police force? How big is the human power, especially the young ones? If we broaden the subject a little more, there are studies that refer to

the point: “capacity of the state which is primarily military but not limited to it.” This questions the capacity of the state in mobilizing and convincing the dominant mass politically. There is an important theory that suggests examining this point in order to understand the conflicts.

“Political subjectivities” - in fact, there are various approaches that focus more on the decision mechanisms of political actors such as preferences, strategies, identities and priorities of political actors.

The share of power is another important actor-based variable. How is the share of power within the country? Is the administrative and political structure based on the distribution or centralization of power? This is an important variable.

“The participation level of the third parties” - Have third parties been able to participate in such cases? Is there such an accumulation or not? This is also a fundamental issue. Are the official agreements accumulating? Is there any accumulation of official agreements between the parties? I think 112 written treaties have been signed in the Philippines. They proceeded with a huge accumulation of agreements.

In summary, these are the basic dynamics underlined by the general opinions that analyze the qualitative aspect of the work rather than the numbers, and reading it a little in-depth.

In order to understand our case, we should accept that we have a huge table in front of us. We are not dealing with a simple social formation.

What kind of a picture do we mainly describe when we talk about a subject on the solution of such cases? Let’s take a look at this. What does conflict resolution and social peace building mean? There is a huge accumulation of knowledge on this subject too, but I will make a presentation mentioning two names today, both are academics. One of them is Johan Galtung, you might have heard him if you have interest in the subject. The other one is John P. Lederach, who is both an academic and a practitioner; he has made face-to-face consultancy and intervened in such cases.

GALTUNG AND THE TYPES OF VIOLENCE

Galtung uses some critical notions about the issue. The concepts that we use and refer to a lot in the Kurdish issue. Galtung’s focus point is violence. In

fact, he expresses the definition of peace as “nonviolent” at the minimum level; his starting point is an environment where there is no violence. Then what is violence? It has a framework that diversifies and elaborates the issue of violence, as we understand it today, and makes a valuable contribution to these discussions.

Galtung talks about three main forms of violence. The first one is “direct,” the second is “structural,” and the third is “cultural violence.” What he means by direct violence is that there is a concrete actor who performs the act of violence and observes the influence of it on the other party. In other words, if there is a concrete actor who uses violence and sends it directly to its recipient, he calls it “direct violence.” This violence can be verbal or physical, but actually it is a process that causes physical, mental or spiritual injuries. If this happens constantly, trauma occurs. He says that traumas can also continue, as a constant violence we often encounter in our case.

Unfortunately, Galtung says that these cases are more than physical or direct violence. He mainly claims that there is a structural violence in which this violence is also embedded, or in fact he says that we are faced with a dimension such as structural violence. He actually means that there is a form of violence that is embedded in social relations and shapes the behavior of the relevant actors, this violence is based on inequalities between groups and intergroup. He calls it “structural violence.” He argues that in such divided societies this structural violence operates through at least four mechanisms. One of them is *penetration* where structural violence is produced by penetrating social structures. Another is the stratification, which we call *segmentation*; the segregation of the society into layers of groups. Also, the decomposition, what we call *fragmentation* and finally, *marginalization*.

In summary, he claims that in daily life there is a structural violence that does not have a visible actor but permeates the relations among social groups and creates inequality and operates accordingly. He claims that this works particularly as a political pressure in the political field and as a mechanism of economic exploitation in the economic field. Therefore, he underlines that the violence we call is not an actor alone and does not exist physically; it is, conceptually, an issue including a larger area.

The third, Galtung talks about a violence that makes these previous two forms of violence possible. He claims that there is another form of violence that justifies direct and structural violence. He calls this cultural violence. “Structural violence” increases the social confirmation, he argues that the

consent mechanisms work with various institutions like religious mechanisms, culture, law, art, media, education, but in fact it naturalizes, or normalizes, the direct and structural violence and the production of consent for this confirmation in the society. He claims that this is also cultural violence. He actually divides structural violence into political and economic violence and says that four basic types of violence work. He argues that peace should be analyzed considering these four types of violence. The main concept he proposes to understand these four forms of violence is *power*. The solution will be produced through power relations like direct power of violence, political power and cultural power.

NEGATIVE PEACE, POSITIVE PEACE

According to Galtung, there are tendencies to try to understand the issue in academia and there are studies that face the issue with a normative approach and aim to solve it. Galtung is mostly interested in the second dimension of the business. His approach is not concerned only with diagnosis. He is trying to find a solution to the issue and compares all of his methods to medicine. He says that social actors should intervene in violence cases or conflict similar to the way a doctor treats a disease. In medicine, first the diagnosis is made, then the emergence and progression processes of this disease are analyzed and an appropriate therapy process is initiated. Accordingly, when analyzing the conflict cases, first we should ask questions like: “What is the kind of violence, what kind of an incident we are facing, how did it come up, what is the current situation and how will be the course of it?” Eventually there should be a therapy, a solution.

He has two remarkable concepts named “negative peace” and “positive peace” which he created on the basis of medicine. Processes that reduce violence or interventions aimed at ending violence, such as those that slow down the course of a disease, are defined as a state of negative peace or a tendency towards negative peace. According to him, the end of violence is a negative peace. But life-healing processes, like an intervention towards permanent well-being after illness, represent peace. “Positive Peace”, is not only the end of violence but also during which a general well-being can be reproduced and good relationships are established, and distinguishes these two concepts from each other. He essentially describes negative peace as the absence of an organized, collective violence. In other words, he says that if there is no violence, peace is built negatively, but social peace does not only consist of it and that it should include positive peace. In order to talk about positive peace, he mentions that even more positive values such as cooperating with

the society, integrating with each other, ensuring social equality or eliminating exploitation mechanisms should spread. I would also like to explain this; essentially he makes three definitions. Since these definitions are quoted verbatim from English, it may sound a bit strange when translated into Turkish.

For example, he describes direct positive peace: "It will include verbal and physical kindness, well-being towards the body, mind and soul of oneself and the other, providing all basic needs, participation in life, well-being, freedom and identity. As the unity of bodies, minds and souls, love is like the symbol and summary of direct positive peace. "

For structural positive peace, on the other hand, he adds: "It will replace freedom for oppression and equality for exploitation. It will then strengthen dialogue instead of penetration, integration instead of stratification, solidarity instead of segregation and participation instead of marginalization. "

Finally, he talks about cultural positive peace: "By building a positive culture of peace, it will replace the legitimacy of violence in religion, law and ideology, language, arts and science, school, universities, and the media with the legitimacy of peace. It will mean opening up to many human predispositions and capacities rather than pressure in the inner world of the person, the *self*."

In summary, Galtung talks about a discourse that includes a normative horizon as social development, not only a state of nonviolence. He mentions at least ten basic norms as the basic components of positive peace. One of them is the "existence of cooperation." He says that if there is a positive peace, there must be cooperation in the social structure. He adds that people must be in a state of being free from fear and the wishes of others. He frames the minimum norms of positive peace with a state of economic growth and development, the absence of exploitation, equality, justice, freedom to act, pluralism and dynamism.

OVERCOMING THE CONFLICTS BY TRANSFORMATION

Galtung provided an important contribution to conflict resolution and peace building studies with the conceptualizations he developed about the analysis of three forms of violence. Also, the negative/positive distinction should be noted as an important contribution. In addition to these two analyses and conceptualizations, he also has an approach called *transcend*, which is translated into Turkish as "overcoming conflicts by transforming." I will mention about that, and then move on to the second name, Lederach.

Galtung argues that a lasting peace can be made with a satisfactory framework rather than a rough equality process. He says that in such cases, the conflicts cannot be resolved and peace cannot be built through an “all or nothing” approach. According to him, the main issue is to aim for a lasting peace and it is possible with a framework that satisfies the parties. Its basic formulation is “not only, but also.” Let’s say one party says “this” in the current issue, and the other says “that.” He says that a formulation that transforms the “either this or that” approach into “not only, but also” should be found. He proposes to reframe and reconstruct the issue except the general clichés.

There is a well-known example: the Orange sample. It is very ordinary but a good example to stick in mind. He says that a mother has an orange in her hand in a house and has two children. They both want the orange. To whom will the mom give the orange? Normally she will have to give it to someone and break the heart of the other. Then the mother asked, “What will you do with the orange?” One says, “I’ll drink the juice of it,” another says, “I’m going to make a cake.” The mother gives the juicy part to one kid, and the remaining pulp to the other one for the cake. Maybe it is a simple example, but the main point is “in a story that seems to be conflicting and irreconcilable, can we build a good framework in which both sides can find a satisfactory position?” Can the subject be reconstructed to ask questions and find appropriate answers to them?

There is a distinguishing case during the border fight between Ecuador and Peru. It caused conflict three times. Almost sixty years of conflict. It is roughly a border fight. They turn the relevant border zone into a bi-national park area and open it to the control of two countries and solve the problem in this way. You can also adapt solutions that satisfy both sides also in terms of political issues.

For the conflict resolution, as a conclusion, Galtung points out six essential affairs to be done. One of these is the “culture of peace.” He says that in order to overcome the cultural violence, a culture of peace comprehending a perception of the legitimacy of peace and a collective subconscious must be created. Secondly, strengthening the structures about peace. In other words, he says that we have issues to work on about creating an environment that reduce the inequalities and structurally supports and promotes peace. The third issue is “mediation”. Exactly as I mentioned, he talks about the intervention, sometimes as a need, of the third parties in terms of reconstructing the issue, presenting a new frame by reading something other than classical reading. Therefore, he says, mediation and facilitation activities are critical

in reconstructing the issue and producing a satisfactory solution. “Concrete peace building,” this term defines a function for a non-conflicting situation, as one of the main jobs by providing direct contact between the conflicting parties. Another issue is “non-violent.” Galtung says that the most important method in this whole issue should be nonviolent. His main thesis is that violence breeds counter-violence and this cycle feeds each other. If one side practices violence and the other side has a desire for peace, the latter should be able to answer the first one with nonviolent methods so that it can break this cycle. Otherwise, he says, “It’s doomed to stay in the loop.” Finally, he says that healing activities should be carried out to eliminate the traumas and continuous forms of violence caused by such cases.

LEDERACH AND THE SOCIAL LAYERS OF PEACE

There are many names working on this subject, but one of the most prominent that contributes to the discussions is John P. Lederach. He is pondering on “how can peace be built in divided societies?” This is his main focus. The vast majority of conflicts after the Second World War are intrastate conflicts. Rather than wars and conflicts between states, we are faced with a situation where conflicts mostly take place within the state. In such cases, divided societies have to live together after a solution. Therefore, Lederach says that it is necessary to set out with a goal of peace that will make it possible to live together. Considering these cases, especially after 1946, he claims that conflicts occur intensely in “periphery countries,” in societies where poverty, inequality and underdevelopment areas are present. He argues that in such cases, in fact, deep social divisions occur both on the vertical and the horizontal plane, and therefore the real issue is precisely to construct initiatives that will eliminate these horizontal and vertical divisions and make social interconnection possible again. Therefore, he claims that this issue is a multi-level and multi-actor peace reconstruction. He framed the issue not only as ceasing the fire, but also as the construction of a new structure where such a divided social structure can re-establish all social relations and live together.

There are three critical main concepts Lederach underlines: relationship, encountering and creative paths. According to Lederach, in such cases, social relations between the two groups are damaged. Therefore, non-relation is not the solution. You don’t have a chance in finding a solution by minimizing or weakening the relationship. On the contrary, you have to solve this issue by relating. Its basic setup here is as follows: One of the main lines is the reconstruction of scattered, broken or eliminated relations. “You can’t put forward the disconnection of two communities or two groups that are at

odds with each other as a solution,” he says. Rather, you have to reestablish this relationship and build it into a good relationship.

For the very reason, he emphasizes the concepts of “encountering” and “meeting.” These social groups have to face both with their own past, memories, wounds, troubles, and the wounds, troubles, anger of the opposing group. So he says that peace building is actually about creating these encounters. If we want to ensure social peace building, we have to precisely study these situations of encounter.

The familiar methods do not work very well, he says that it is necessary to produce more creative or more unknown ways, methods and tools that go beyond the clichés created by the main actors of the conflict. Lederach basically suggests engaging, meeting with ourselves, and the other and doing this in creative ways.

SPACE OF RECONCILIATION

He proposes a concept in this regard: “Space of reconciliation.” It examines the mediation methods the priests use in local community conflicts in South America. Based on this, he develops a theory that he conceptualizes a little. There is a saying in the Bible: “Truth and forgiveness met, peace and justice kissed.” Based on this, Lederach actually constructs the concept of “space of reconciliation” over four concepts. These are truth, justice, forgiveness and peace. In summary, he says: If there is a confrontation with a truth that includes forgiveness and a peace that includes justice social peace is rebuilt. More precisely, he says that in order to reconstruct a space of reconciliation, social reconciliation, a house of peace, there must be a forgiveness that includes confronting the truth. People have to forgive, but they must also face the truth, what happened in the past. At the same time, there must be peace that includes justice.

The point I want to draw your attention is that Lederach proposes a positioning with a future horizon. If you can confront the truth with forgiveness, you can open a space for the future. Again, if you build a peace that includes justice, you can build the future. Forgiveness without truth will reincarnate the conflict, or it will bring about a conflict again after three or five years, ten years, or a generation. Therefore, he says that forgiveness should be discussed with facing the truth and the issue of peace should be dealt with justice. According to him these four concepts mainly mention constructing spaces of reconciliation.

How do we build reconciliation? While searching for an answer to this question, Lederach compares peace to a pyramid. He says there should be a three-fold social negotiation. At the top of the pyramid, there is senior leadership. Negotiation at this level mainly points to mechanisms of dialogue and negotiation between actors in direct conflict. The bottom of the pyramid is leadership at the social level. The actors of this level include broad social segments. In this sense, it highlights ordinary people who are directly confronted with the consequences of conflicts in daily life and the negotiation processes among them. There is intermediate leadership between these two layers of the pyramid. This level includes people and groups who have contact with ordinary people in everyday life but also have a relationship with top leadership and have the potential to be a bridge between the two. We can roughly call this as organized actors or collective actors. He says that these actors can build the peace process by making contact between these two layers.

His main argument is that peace can only work with these three layers; it can be built with a structuring in which negotiations are conducted at the social level, medium level and high level. If you are aware, the further you go down the pyramid, you have more people to reach. Lederach suggests that mid-level leadership, in particular, is of strategic importance in such cases, because he claims that these are the main mediating actors between above and below, that is, between senior leadership and social level leadership. Therefore, he gives the critical role during peace building to the collective actors, organized groups, which we call medium leadership. He means opinion leaders, NGOs, social movements, academics or various groups such as leaders or pioneers, actors of public services.

RELATIONS, SUBSYSTEMS, SYSTEMS

Lederach has developed a model based on this. Although it looks like a complicated model, he argues that the issue has two main axes. One is the structure, and the other one is the process. He claims that in most cases a problem exists within a certain network of relationships, this network builds subsystems and actually builds a general system with it in total. It is necessary to consider this integrity when we intervene in the problems and to take into account the problem is embedded in a certain network of relationships. These relationships also create sub-systems, and this situation builds a general political system. Accordingly, we need to associate the intervention to a crisis with the imagination of the future. To put it more clearly, when we try to solve a problem we should mainly aim at transforming the relationships the problem is embedded in and create a new system.

We can interpret this for the issue of mother language. We must find a solution to the deprivation of mother language (of the Kurds) by considering how this problem creates social relations and how the solution will transform these social relationships. In the context of subsystems, we should be able to link the Kurdish issue to education policies or identity politics. Lederach suggests focusing mainly on the relationships the problems are embedded in (rather than problems and crisis) and the subsystems created by the relationships, and consider this issue in terms of a minimum of ten years. He says that when we intervene in a social issue, a concrete crisis moment, that problem is inherent to a particular relationship or sub-system and it is necessary to intervene in the problem with a ten-year term. The main point is to transform relationships and subsystems. He adds that crisis management alone or intervening in the current issue does not make a lasting contribution.

Ledarach states that this transformation must be four layers, in personal, relational, cultural and structural forms. When you intervene in a crisis or a problematic area, basically there should be a relational transformation and it should have been targeted. He adds that this process should also move on with a cultural transformation. He points out that the two of them together can produce a structural transformation in the longer term.

THE SCOPE OF THE SOCIAL PEACE

We can highlight five key issues before moving on to this final section. First, the issue of conflict resolution or peace building cannot be reduced to laying down arms or negative peace. What we call peace is not only the silence of weapons.

Secondly, these issues are not really easy matters. There is no short-term and easy solution. On the contrary, it is necessary to target and plan a long-term and highly complex social transformation. Most of the time, as a society we predict that “a process starts every six months, one year, two years, five years, and a solution will be found, so that the problem ends.” But unfortunately, this is not the case. In most cases we are faced with an issue spanning a few generations. The collective armed violence part may end in the short term, but we have to know that this is not the real issue, and foresee that it can continue with other faces, other means and forms.

The third point, even the solution of this violence issue cannot be reduced to only the actions of the conflicting actors. We are talking about a huge network of social relations, subsystems and system. We are talking about a large area comprehending all of them.

The fourth point, such problems are not issues that can be solved by political actors alone. If such cases dissolve social relations or construct social relations that dissolve and disrupt them and operate them with various systems and subsystems, we are talking about the transformation of all of them. These are not tasks that political actors alone can do, even if they want to. It is an issue that needs to be solved in a wider area, at different levels, with different actors working collectively and looking out for each other.

Non-governmental organizations can play an important role in conflict resolution and social peace building. This fifth issue is the topic of the third part of the presentation. Let's move on to this section now.

PEACE BUILDING AND CIVIL SOCIETY

So far, we have drawn an overall picture of such cases. Then we have presented the scope of conflicts and social peace building. In this episode, we have drawn attention to the middle level highlighted by Lederach and the roles of the collective actors of this level, including civil society.

So, what can collective actors and civil society organizations do in conflict resolution and social peace building concretely? How do they function concretely? There are studies conducted through these questions and knowledge has been accumulated according to them. "What are the functions of non-governmental organizations in concrete, how do they contribute to concrete situations in such cases?" There are answers given to these questions.

Two German political scientists, Wolfgang Merkel and Hans-Joachim Lauth, draw a framework for civil society in general. They give answers to the questions like: "What has civil society done during rebuilding society after the collapse of the Soviet Union?" One is protection, in other words, the actions of the citizens in the social field, their being in social action and the protection of citizens against the interventions of the state that constrict this action from time to time. In fact, they say that one of the duties of civil society is to protect citizens and civil society actors against the state's restrictive position in this area, or to expand this area.

The second is "participatory socialization." They explain it as follows: The structure of the civil society is ultimately based on the imagination of an organized society and public benefit. Non-governmental organizations function like a school, a school of democracy for the development of a social structure

appropriate to this imagination. They claim that civil society functions as a kind of participatory socialization mechanism to spread the values it defends in the social structure.

Third point is “communication.” The main reference, particularly at this point, is the deliberative democracy thesis. Ultimately, they claim that the essence of deliberative democracy is communication and social networks, and the civil society is precisely the field, actors, or tools that make this communication possible.

“Community building and integration” is the fourth point. The main thesis about this claims that there are many different distinctions in society: family, tribe, urbanism, and fellow citizenship. In fact, they claim that civil society contributes to the construction of a common and collective community or collective group: an integrated and collective community or group, a collectivity, above all these distinctions.

Finally, they say that civil society acts as a mediator between the state and the citizens. They claim that it functions as a mediator actor who transfers the wishes and desires of the citizens to the state in the social sphere.

The functions highlighted by German academics were the general functions of civil society rather than conflict resolution and social peace building. “What can civil society do and do directly in conflict resolution?” There are also studies about this question. Academic and activist Catherine Barnes highlights eight key functions in such cases. One is to make the conflict evolve to a constructive direction. He says that civil society can steer conflicts or direct them to a more constructive area through their work in the social field.

Another point is “changing attitudes.” As we mentioned before, the conflict actors and conflict processes affect relationships and these are reflected in behavior and attitudes. Civil society can function in a transformative way especially in terms of these behaviors; they can work on changing the positions of social actors.

“Setting the peace agenda.” He states that setting an agenda for peace in the public sphere, shaping the peace agenda or the content of the peace agenda is one of the main functions.

“Mobilizing people, the masses for peace.” There can be many ways to do this. It can be a campaign on peace, a mass march, or a petition about an issue.

He emphasizes that mobilizing and mobilizing the mass is one of the basic functions of civil society in conflict resolution and building social peace.

“To reduce violence and support stability.” Non-governmental organizations can reduce physical violence in concrete terms. He claims that there may be steps to prevent injuries to people, through various initiatives such as non-violent or mine-free zones work.

“Building peace at the social level.” Civil society can have a mission about producing value, norm and to make an agenda about peace, or to direct the collective subconscious towards peace.

Final point is “getting to the root of the problem and creating a culture of peace.” On the one hand, there are different crises and problems, but on the other hand there are main and root problems of the issues. They can create an agenda for this, deal with it and contribute to the building of social peace.

THE PLACE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PEACE TREATIES

Two academics, Christine Bell and Catherine O’Rourke, made a study of experience-based conceptualization about the functions of civil society; they did the study by looking at the peace treaties signed. In 102 conflict cases, they examined 441 documents of 73 ongoing negotiations. What role is assigned to civil society in such documents? They analyzed the documents and categorized the role of civil society in four main groups by focusing on this question. The first one is “humanitarian aid.” In such cases, conflict victims often become in need of humanitarian assistance. Civil society can also be the main carrier of this assistance mechanism.

The second point is “monitoring the treaty.” The parties can sign a peace treaty and NGOs can establish various mechanisms, such as a monitoring committee, to check compliance with the treaty. These mechanisms can be formal or informal, but they can fulfill a monitoring function that follows and monitors the agreement signed by the parties and informs the public about it.

The third point is “legitimization, support and dissemination.” Basically, we can describe these kinds of peace treaties as efforts to generate social consent. In summary, they can do any kind of work you can think of to generate consent in society.

As a final concept: “transitional governance and institutional development,”

In such cases, a new constitutional process may be involved in most cases. There are cases where some laws need to be changed or new institutional structures are built. They say that civil society can participate in and contribute to the transition period, to a new administrative and political structuring.

What we are talking about here is not a theory, but a classification of functions that emerge from the analysis of 73 signed texts during the negotiation processes.

NORTHERN IRELAND EXPERIENCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY

I want to talk about the experiences of three cases. The first one is Northern Ireland. What did civil society do there? Especially in Northern Ireland, the functions highlighted by a government actor, even an ambassador. One of them is mediation. In the Northern Ireland experience, we know that especially during periods when the peace process was interrupted, civil society conducted “back door diplomacy,” a kind of mediation, which ensures re-contact between the parties.

The second one is “determining the content of the peace treaty,” We know that civil society in Northern Ireland was also involved in determining the content of the peace agreement, such as what should be in the peace agreement, which issues should be under the negotiation title and on what the parties should agree.

The third is “expertise support,” Civil society is actually a wide field, but these institutions that are specialized in certain fields and jobs, produce information and have the capacity about those fields. TIHV can be an example, which has many years of experience in treating torture victims’ trauma. The state can also use this experience in a possible peace process. We know that similar tasks are done in Northern Ireland.

The fourth is “strengthening the idea of peace in the society.” In fact, it is what we call peace culture or the experiences that will produce social consent for peace.

The fifth is “creating safe spaces for the victims of conflict.” This does not mean physically safe areas, but any task that improves the daily lives of these victims. This can be physical or financial assistance or it can be psychological support. We can describe it as supporting people who have lost their mental and physical sense of security so that they can regain this feeling. It is a wide range, from trauma to financial aid, to food aid.

The final point is “the function of living together in harmony.” This is actually an ongoing function. Do not think that these problems are all over. In Northern Ireland, this last article was probably not implemented. We know that social segregation still continues despite the peace treaty. Civil society continues to work towards the solution of the problem.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PHILIPPINES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

In the Philippines, a case I studied in more detail, we see four prominent, basic functions. The first one of them is mediation and facilitation. In the Philippines, an example that has not existed in the world until now was applied. An international commission was established to bring the parties together and manage the peace process. The four members of the commission were states. One of them is Turkey. It continues since 2012. With the mediation of Turkey, Britain, Japan and Saudi Arabia, the clashes between the Philippines government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), concentrated in the southern part of the country and, almost reaching 50 years, was ended by an agreement and a referendum at the beginning of 2019. The peace process continues at the moment. A Bangsamoro Autonomous Region was established with that referendum and the process is running.

In addition to the four states, four international NGOs also took part as mediators and they are still doing so. In other words, NGOs, which are four of the eight members of the main commission that manages the process, have contributed to the process by taking equal positions with the states. Surely, these were various international non-governmental organizations that focused entirely on this work.

The second phase is the monitoring process. A five-person monitoring commission was established in the Philippines. Two of them were local and two were international NGOs. One of two international NGOs was from Turkey: İHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation). Moro Islamic Liberation Front determined two NGOs, one local and one international, and the other two were determined by the Philippines state. The five-person commission regularly monitored and reported whether the parties complied with the peace agreement and presented it to the public.

The third phase was the establishment of the agenda of the peace negotiations. This is an issue that stands out in almost all of the cases. In other words, we know that NGOs are doing various works regarding the issue of the content of peace.

Finally, we know that NGOs are also working to create public support for peace - an issue that is seen in almost all cases.

THE EXPERIENCE OF COLOMBIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY

As the final step, let's talk about Colombia. Although some commanders of the FARC decided to return to the armed struggle, an agreement was signed recently.

According to the agreement, civil society has four main roles. One of them is advocacy of peace in social area. The other is making an agenda, here also points to a gigantic mechanism. Approximately 61 thousand proposals are sent directly to the peace table through various forums and structures. Civil society can develop recommendations through various forums and send them in writing directly to the peace table that continues as a group.

We see that peace zones, that is, areas where weapons do not enter, are being built. We know that there is an experience of peace that ensures the physical security of the citizens.

Colombia is also a good case in terms of dealing with the past and the justice issue. A huge agenda has been set in this regard and it has been ensured that some mechanisms are included in the latest peace treaty. There are three mechanisms. First, a special competent court for peace is established, in the context of dealing with the past. A commission is constituted in order to reveal the truth, coexistence and prevent duplication. Also a unit called "Searching for the Losses" is established within the text of the agreement, all these efforts are the works that are forced by the civil society. In addition, NGOs have achieved to proceed a little about persuading the authorities on handling the cases of sexual violence as a part of dealing with the past.

SEVEN BASIC FUNCTIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN PEACE BUILDING

Finally, I would like to share the theoretical framework we use as a base in the Peace Foundation report. This model, developed by Thania Paffenholz and Christoph Spurk, are both important because its conceptual framework is wider and it is built on a certain field experience. This model has also formed the main bar of our ongoing program. It may take your interest and you can read in detail.

Paffenholz and Spurr built their model on a theoretical framework¹ that deals with the literature on peace, democracy and development together. Actually, civil society is a formation that touches all three issues. Civil society is a prominent concept in the issue of peace, democratization, democracy, state and development, as it may have taken your attention. The relevant authors created a framework by blending all three literatures with a group of academics and adapted the relevant framework to eleven countries. One or two academics work on a case. Turkey was also included in which Ayşe Betül Çelik wrote the case. I think Esra Çuhadaroğlu wrote about Cyprus and Guatemala. They also had the chance to test this theoretical framework by applying it in eleven cases. One valuable aspect of this theory is that it has been tested in eleven cases.

This model highlights seven basic functions of civil society. It can be roughly called a functional model. The first function is “the protection of citizens”. Essentially, they say: Any task that can physically protect citizens against the physical violence from the state or the rebels. We can talk about the construction of peace zones, human shield actions, and building mine-free areas. We can say that these actions are directly aimed at the physical protection of the citizens. They argue that the civil society can actually do things that prevent certain groups from being harmed by violence, as much as they can.

The second is “advocacy and public communication.” They consider the defense of peace in the public sphere, the defense of peace as a normative value, as one of their main functions. We can add both traditional media and social media to this. We can draw a very broad framework on this subject. They say that defending peace is an essential business in itself. In summary, we are talking about all kinds of efforts to spread the idea of “we have to make peace, peace is a good and necessary thing,” in the society.

The third function is “in-group socialization and a culture of peace.” The point they highlight here is the conflict can have sides or groups. They say it’s important to build a framework and work within your community, based on nonviolent communication, regardless of your group. They say it is necessary to create a normative ground or environment that prevents violence on the lower, cultural ground. They claim that this can work with nonviolent

¹ For a comprehensive theoretical discussion and different case studies on what functions civil society actors can fulfill in conflict resolution and social peacebuilding work, see: Thania Paffenholz (Ed.), *Civil Society and Peacebuilding: A Critical Assessment* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010). For a comprehensive discussion of Turkey’s Kurdish conflict that the position of civil society actors and the role of accounting see: Cuma Çiçek, *2013-2015 Çözüm Sürecinde Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları* (Barış Vakfı Publications, 2017).

communication. You may not have contact with the “other group.” You can defend peace and nonviolence within any community you are in. To put it more concretely, you can also be in the network of the rebels, and you can also advocate for peace there. You can be in the network of the government or the A, B, C party, and spread peace and nonviolence within it.

The fourth function is “monitoring and accountability.” Any work that monitors, reports and publicizes the consequences of the conflict cases. This was probably done best by İHD in Turkey, who kept report of the casualties and shared it with the public. Basically they undertook the follow-up, monitoring, reporting of the unjust treatments and violations of rights caused by the conflict, their announcement to the public and the archiving of them.

The fifth function is “conflict sensitive social cohesion.” He talks about the work that is generated after the gathering and contact of the conflicting groups or groups in networks clustered around them. For example Eko-Politik did this in Turkey, through the theme of opposing groups, such as bringing together the families of people who lost their lives on opposite sides in conflict. Lederach, if you remember, was also focusing on relationship, encounter and creative paths; works that center this encounter. We can say all kinds of effort that will support you to get out of your home or neighborhood and get in touch with the opposite neighborhood.

The sixth function is “mediation and facilitation.” This may be between actors in direct conflict or between groups within networks that have been clustered around these actors. We are mainly talking about a kind of facilitating, mediating activities that improve the relationship of the two groups and ensure re-association.

Finally, “direct service delivery.” Both authors put a question mark on this function. “Is it the job of civil society to produce services? Is it the job of civil society to provide kindergarten education? Is it the job of civil society to provide food aid to the victims of conflict? They ask these kinds of questions. This is a controversial issue. The main thesis argues: If this function gives room for the other six functions, if it is an introduction then it can be considered as a function of civil society. For example, you will only be able to enter a conflict zone with humanitarian assistance and with the help of this service you can enter the field and do other work like peace building, mediation, monitoring and evaluation. Maybe you can also prepare a food aid program synchronously with the reporting process. According to the authors, civil society is not an actor who actually provides services directly. It is not an actor that provides

the service the state should and it should not. This, also, is a controversial issue. Paffenholz and Spurk incorporate the direct service delivery function into their models, on condition that it opens up space for six other functions. This can be any service. It can be food aid, psychological support for torture victims, or legal supports in a legal process as bar associations do. As a result, any assistance aimed directly at meeting needs, whether physical or not.

In order to understand how these seven functions might work or which one is a little more important, both authors highlight three main concepts and say that three main tasks need to be done. One of them is “understanding context.” They say that you need to grasp the context of the relevant case. What we mean here is the cultural, socioeconomic structure of the country, its place in the region and the global structure, its position, the political regime, the position of the media, the main actors in the social structure, and the gender roles, in fact, more structural issues that shape and direct social relations. So it is necessary to understand the general profound structure of the country.

Second, what does “peace building” mean for the parties concerned? What are the perceptions of the actors in the social structure regarding peace? What does the relevant government, rebels and society understand when it comes to peace? They argue that these groups understand different things from peace and that civil society should understand these different approaches. They say that it would not be possible to fulfill these seven functions effectively without realizing that there are different positions regarding peace. They say that a mapping of the necessities should be prepared in medium and long term, considering what peace building means, the positions of the direct and indirect parties.

Finally, “what is the status of civil society?” You analyze the context, and then in this context, you also analyze what you need for peace. Well, what can civil society do at this point? They argue that a profile of civil society should be constructed. Who is this civil society, what is its social base, what are its financial resources, what is its internal structure? For example, in many of our studies, there are criticisms saying that there are organizations that do not produce the values claimed by the civil society, but do the reverse. I remember the words of one of our professors in the report we wrote for the Peace Foundation: “They call it civil society, but the same men have been running it for the last twenty years.” On the one hand, how far will you be able to talk about this peace issue in the country when you have such a civil society experience? So what are the structures, values and ways of doing business of this civil society? In fact, what we call civil society, in the context of advocacy,

are institutions that can criticize political actors for the “public good.” What is the situation in Turkey? What is the relation of civil society with politics, media and social base? Grassroots organizations, organizations with mass contact, or bureaucratized structures between four walls? You also have to draw a profile of the civil society.

I gave a number at the beginning. It was 110 thousand in 2014, now it is probably 130 thousand. We know that two thousand associations among 130 thousand are interested in such issues. You have to do business knowing this situation. Are we going to go with two thousand associations now or are we going to think about other tools that can include the remaining 128 thousand associations? You have no chance to proceed without knowing this structure.

Based on the experience of the eleven cases I have mentioned, Paffenholz highlights seven common points.

First of all, the most critical information that emerges when looking at cases from this theoretical framework is, in my opinion, the following: Civil society organizations functioned not as a determinant but as a supportive actor in such cases. He says the decisive actors are political actors and actors in conflict. More precisely, Paffenholz says this as a result of case studies. This is the first point.

Second, this current theory provides a functional framework for understanding cases. Since the protection of citizens, advocacy of peace, public communication, monitoring and evaluation are function-based, this model provides the opportunity to focus not only on civil society but also on a wider set of actors including civil society.

Third, he says that these seven functions may differ or differ in field knowledge depending on the intensity of the conflict. While the focus of civil society is on mediation or the protection of citizens in a period of intense conflict, it may be necessary to focus more on public communication, advocacy or conflict-sensitive social cohesion and intra-group socialization in a period when the peace treaty and the negotiation process are in operation. He claims that seven functions are not always important at the same time, and that certain functions should be emphasized according to the location and situation of the conflict cases.

Fourth, Paffenholz says that in most cases there is actually an imbalance between the work that civil society is doing and the needs. For example, he

states that civil society focuses on mediation when there is a need for social advocacy. According to the field experiences, he claims that there is an imbalance between the needs and the concrete work of civil society, and that functions are not centered on the appropriate needs.

Fifth, the effectiveness of civil society can vary from function to function. According to the field experience, mainly monitoring and accountability, facilitation and protection of citizens are what civil society also did in these eleven cases. But the remaining four functions are those in which good experiences do not emerge.

Sixth, such cases actually generate multiple social cleavages. Nevertheless, civil society focuses on certain points or high-profile issues. However, they do not pay attention to the different layers and areas of conflict that are more common where these issues are embedded. In fact, they claim that social divisions are more diverse, different and more, but that non-governmental organizations generally work on the main issues and differences that have already emerged.

Finally, he highlights the question of context. He states that it is necessary to get to know the context on which you are working, the general structure and the ground we are on. He claims that in the cases studied, evaluations of which function might be functional at what time and how are not made well, precisely because of insufficient context analysis. Therefore, he suggests that civil society should set a role for itself, define its functions and take a position by focusing a bit on this context.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *There was an Initiative to Keep Hasankeyf Alive before. I was an administrator there. I am still an official member. We had campaigns against the Ilisu Dam. We held panels and conferences. We received support from the mayors and visited the region village by village. We could not get much support though. I tried to shoulder this organization alone from 2012 to 2013. We organized a youth camp. We tried to include friends in terms of sociality, but no synergy emerged. For example, we are now at the Peace School. I have attended the Human Rights School before. Again, nothing came out of there. In this sense, we had a lot of knowledge on sharing the experiences; you have also participated. I don't know if it's fear or reluctance, somehow some problems arise. It feels like we're flogging a dead horse. I want to know the reason of it. Why is it floating like this?*

I don't think that we are flogging a dead horse. Maybe we have to admit this from the beginning: The cases we are faced with are not cases that can be solved in three months, five months or five years. If we take 1984 as a basis, in our case, we have left the thirty-five years behind. I was born in 1980. It started when I was born, and it will take another generation or two. Once we are talking about an issue that transcends generations, let me say it especially for these kinds of issues, I have to accept in advance that these kinds of problems cannot be resolved in a very short term. We are talking about a huge social transformation. You have to know that this will take a long time, this is the first dimension.

The second dimension is that we probably have nearly twenty members in DİSA. Most of them are people who are experts in certain fields. DİSA was founded in 2011, we have an eight-year life span. I think we have about fifteen reports. Is it worthless? No, I think it is precious. We have produced valuable information about guardianship. It will probably remain at our disposal for fifty years. We have created a valuable knowledge on mother language, and about solving problems related to it. This will also be at our disposal. In terms of contribution, it probably occupies as much as a drop does in a sea. Ultimately, not much will be accumulated without those drops. I think that civil society should take a position with consideration that it is an area requiring a large and huge mobilization; taking a position but also knowing the limits. This is the second aspect of the work.

About the third dimension, I consider two theories regarding peace processes. First of all, there are some studies that deal with the issue from a "normative framework" and take a position saying, "peace is good, recommended, and beautiful" to an extent. I'm not saying that normative is worthless. As a norm, defense of peace is a fundamental issue in all theories. It is important to defend peace as a norm. But this is one side of the business. There is also a second side: addressing peace as a need. There is a theory called rational choice theory. It is not a theory that I personally adopt, a theory that I keep away from. Roughly, there is peace when peace is profitable from war, materially or symbolically. If you want to build peace, you need to make peace more "profitable" both materially and symbolically. It is a theory that says, "If you expect people to embrace their desires, feelings or adopt them as a norm, the resolution of the problem will be left to next generations." Should we center peace as a norm in peace building work or frame peace as a need?

I can remind you of the orange example. We will progress as much as we code this as a need. I think there is a problem here too. We have a tendency that

refers too much to the norms. Peace as a norm is a good thing, but the truth is that in everyday life, norms alone do not determine people's behavior or there are some rational choices embedded in these norms, not independent of them, but inherent in them. These can be material or symbolic to a certain extent. Perhaps it will be necessary to reconstruct that rational part of the work.

I am thinking out loud now. In my opinion the most prominent point in Peace Foundation's report was: The community of civil society in Turkey is very much in the shadow of political institutions. This proposition applies to all actors. There is a civil society community that accepts that the main determinant is the political actor and is somewhat overshadowed by it, taking positions accordingly and positioned accordingly with it. That is to say, there is a society that has become a ghetto in the field of politics. It works like this and this angle is deepened.

I think the civil society community should consider the relationship between civil society and politics again. This does not contribute to the inner world either. For example, a civil society that takes positions according to its own political actor has a role, at best, to tell the decisions of the political actor to the society. They have killed their capacity to do work with a self-criticism mechanism within themselves. It is something that narrows the potential for critical advancement in its own community. Beyond this, it is something that almost ends the transition to the other neighborhood. When you are working under the shadow of your own political actor, you go to the other neighborhood when your political actor passes, and when he does not, you also do not. I think this is an important issue. The relationship between civil society and politics should at least have a critical position, civil society may have a community even within its own "community"; I do not define civil society as non-political actors, I do not have such a position. When appropriate, there should be a position to be able to say, "we did this wrong, we need to enter the opposite neighborhood," even within his own community.

Let me add something much more general. After all, we don't have a very strong tradition of civil society in Turkey. There are nearly 130 thousand associations. The number of advocating associations is around two thousand. The remaining 128 thousand associations do not touch such critical issues at all. Even if it touches, it looks at the state and political power first. They take positions according to what they say. Our community is already such a community.

Therefore, we should tell people, "if we do not do this, we will have to pay the price," and we should claim this job as a need. We can say, "If we do this job,

let alone the price, we can build a better life for ourselves and our children.” Its path must come across with some need. Maybe we will move forward with great difficulty. As a society, we don’t get wiser before we fall and break a series. Maybe we should fall a little bit more. But I don’t think it’s a waste of time. We’re just trying to get involved in a part of a whole issue. Let’s know that. We should not dream too big, beyond the institutional capacity. What is the context, what are the boundaries of the context, it is necessary to know the answers. What and how much time is needed for change? I’m not talking about passivity here, you just need to know the location and know that this job takes time and we need to be with other actors.

Participant: *Now, I want two points to be discussed and it is necessary to come to a conclusion on this issue. First, what should be the relations of non-governmental organizations with the conflict parties? Or should the conflict parties have their own civil society organizations? That is, should civil society be a party of the conflict ideologically or politically, or should it consist of actors outside of them? Second, apart from these ideological and political ties, should conflict parties finance non-governmental organizations or not? These are important problems for civil society. Let me concretize this with two examples. In Turkey, after Abdullah Öcalan’s call in 1999, a group of PKK members (named Peace Group) in the peace process of that era came to Turkey. One of those who came was my proxy. After a while, he became the leader of a peace initiative. What is the effect level of such a thing now? Second, there is an NGO called İHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation), it is very effective. In this last fifteen years, it has been conducting all its funding and organizations through the government. Now are they civil society or something else? How should we discuss them? What should be the relations of civil society with the parties of the conflict in terms of ideology, politics and funding? In my opinion, this is the crucial issue of civil society.*

Participant: *We are also working on peace and conflict resolution, but for example, we, as civil society, are very much aware of this. Are we advocating? Are we doing a monitoring study or a reporting study? This is actually a situation that really makes things very complicated; things become an issue in this process. As you mentioned, there are two approaches when dealing with peace work. One sees it as normative and the other sees as a need. Perhaps the third one creates a picture like this. As we approach peace, we approach it as if it is the beginning of something. However, peace is the result of something. Peace is a struggle that cannot be considered without a struggle of human rights, thought and opinion.*

Now, what is the mission of civil society in this sense, or what is the mission that civil society workers impose on themselves? This is the point where we get stuck. Also, continuing to do things in the same old way actually takes us to a position that regresses us a lot. For example, it is always old people and men who talk about these issues. We have also seen this in the Wise People Committee. Although it was a state determined and very male process, I want to add this. In fact, issues having many gerontocratic influences and on which, always, such elderly people always speak are not resolved. Seeking such ways and methods of including other segments of society, for example the youth, will perhaps produce solutions for all of us in the long run.

Participant: *I am part of Keskesor LGBTI+ formation. We organized an event called "Peace Workshop" in Izmir, Istanbul. The event started very well. First of all, people answered the question, "What is your vision for peace?" Then we asked, "What are your goals and activities?" There was no problem either. But when we come to the last part, "What can be done in these seven chapters?," everyone was in a state of stagnation, inability to give an answer. I tried to open the question: "We may not be able to protect the citizens, but can we defend peace in public?" Some feeble voices come out when we asked. How should we interpret this? We should not ignore the issue, considering it as a part of Turkey's unique conditions. As you have mentioned about both positive and negative peace definitions, is it easier to build positive peace after building negative peace? Because the conflict is ongoing and people are holding back; especially the state does not look positively towards peace. It was as if we saw the fear that "the concept of peace has been marginalized and I will be punished when I speak about it." On the one hand, we can talk about this.*

How can civil society organizations come together with all social movements? It can be very difficult for just one movement or group to conduct this alone. Nearly two thousand non-governmental organizations are trying to do this. What are the ways of doing this, or are there examples of it in the world? I wonder how positive peace can be established while the conflict continues.

Participant: *I work as a tradesman. One of the phenomena that create confusion in my mind is a common definition of civil society. The ambiguity of the questions asked by friends who spoke here shows the fact that a certain definition of civil society has not yet been approved. That is to say, the civil society movements and organizations act mostly as a mediator in conflicts; it stands as a third eye, a third subject on the brink of victimization, violations of rights and all conflicts. However, what drew my attention here*

today were the individual echoes of the conflict that has been going on for forty years or maybe one hundred and twenty years. This should have also been the motivation of DİSA or another NGO to be formed: our own losses, our own pain, and motivation of curing our own wounds. I think in that sense, there is confusion about it. Should NGOs organize themselves only as an organization or as a movement? Consequently, should they be politicians in the peace building, be a first-order actor, or take a role tolerating the conflicts and consolidation of the dissatisfied agreements we call reconciliation or mediation? In your examples, in the theoretical frameworks, this was the dominant side of the other two models except the third part model. It was about an organization that was looking for more of a dissatisfied consensus. In Turkey, in our region we need a very serious clarity. This is the motivation for me to come here today. I wonder what the role of NGOs is and can we make a common definition of civil society?

I personally acknowledge the heterogeneity of non-governmental organizations. There will not be a homogeneous definition of civil society that everyone can agree on, and such organizations will not compromise. Probably, on the one hand, there will be civil society organizations directly controlled by governments,² on the other hand, there will be NGOs positioned as a direct extension of political movements. Along with these, there will be actors who are distant to the conflicting parties and who attempt to mediate between the parties. I think this diversity will continue. An attempt to go to a homogenization here will not work.

You might say that, as a norm, civil society should be non-governmental and work for the public good. We have a few conditions. There are at least minimum conditions such as non-profit making, working for the public benefit, being critical and not involved with the state and government, but beyond these rules, there is no definition of civil society accepted by everyone. Probably there won't be in action too. I think this diversity will continue. The point is that certain types of organizations may need to become widespread in order to make room for the public good in this diversity. "What should that type be?" Maybe we can follow this question. Otherwise, the others will continue on their way. I do not think we have a preventing power in this.

One of the prominent points in the report of our Peace Foundation was this: If you look at these seven functions, what are the functions that directly

² Such organizations are defined in the literature as GONGO, the government-organized non-governmental organizations.

address decision makers; in fact, the function of mediation and facilitation. Functions that require direct contact with the organization, the state, and a conversation with them. But when we look at the others, the protection of citizens, advocacy, public communication, in-group socialization and peace culture, conflict-sensitive social cohesion, monitoring and accountability are functions that actually deal with “street”; functions of public demonstrations and street manifestations. The report highlights a point: In Turkey very few organizations are interested about the subject. The majority of those who are interested also prefer to follow the relevant decision makers or, we have seen in the report, that there is not much enthusiasm for jobs that do not bring profit in the short term, that require going deep and running more, but there is a lot of enthusiasm and desire in areas such as addressing the organization and the state, being a mediator and an arbitrator. Maybe we can focus on business that returns to society rather than political decision makers, or we can do things to grow the civil society community that focuses on these jobs. This is one aspect of the work.

In response to the question about the relationship between civil society and politics, I can say the following: Frankly, maybe both. I think in any case, there will be institutions that are directly in the organic network of interested parties, in-group socialization and peace culture function says this. In your neighborhood, in your group you can strengthen the peace position. For example, an NGO can directly take part in the Kurdish movement, not even have a mission about talking to the state, the Turks or the government, but it can do things within its community that will strengthen the peace as a permanent situation, and take a position according to that situation. Some NGOs can function better. An inside NGO may have a higher potential to do this. It is not possible to prevent this functionally. When I look at the case, there will be such organizations anyway. It can be debated whether it is good or not, but at least these organizations can do things in which they can take a position in favor of peace, or when the issue of war or conflict comes to the agenda in that community, they can do things to prevent it.

In addition to these NGOs, I think there should be a non-governmental community that is not engaged with the parties, but which focuses on the public interest, places the benefit of the street and the critical mind at the center. DİSA is one of the institutions trying to take a position in this field. But I think both types of NGOs can do things related to peace. In this sense, I think it is not realistic to expect all non-governmental organizations to keep distance from politics.

I don't remember the exact case but sometimes the existence of such "organic organizations" can function in order to mobilize the base quickly in the processes where the top leadership is very central. But if the NGOs that are organically engaged in politics prefer to remain the same and do not have a clear position on peace, that does not change from conjuncture to conjuncture, they turn into a mediator and transmitter actor after a while. When necessary, they also become agents and transmitters of war.

Let's consider the mainstream media. A media more or less serving peace was created during the Resolution Process. But after the process was over, the factory defaults have been restored as if nothing had happened. Why? In fact, the media is dependent to the center. When the political center says A, it does A; when it says B, it does B. He takes positions according to war when he says war, according to peace when he says peace. In fact, these shifts should not occur.

You can be an AK Party association or you can share AK Party's social imagination. I don't see a big problem here. I wish the NGO community that is not engaged in political parties were wider. But at least you can take a position in favor of peace under any circumstances within AK Party. Within yourself, within AK Party, CHP or HDP community, you can steadily defend the line of peace. Perhaps you can do things that support such NGOs to take a position on peace.

But in any case, apart from them, proliferation of actors who are political but not engaged in political parties and acting in the public interest is critical.

Something came to my mind regarding your question about the relationship between functions. Now they say that, in the Paffenholz and Spurk models, it would actually be better to fulfill some functions together. For example, they say that advocacy can be more effective if the monitoring and accountability function well. A good information network and monitoring process to feed this can actually strengthen public defense. Consequently, performing only one function out of seven is out of question. Maybe you can do a few of them. In fact, according to the information gathered in field, you do better by bridging these few. So I'm not so sure whether that confusion is anything negative or not. If this is well built, we may focus on three functions maybe not seven functions if a bridge can be established between these functions.

For example, direct service delivery opens doors to other functions, or monitoring activity supports advocacy. Or, when the number of children who died in the conflict is known, when it has a report, field, and reliable

information, the chance of making a public defense is higher and the advocacy efforts are more effective. Institution A can also establish this bridge alone, it can perform three functions and establish a bridge among them, or institutions that perform each function well can also establish a network among themselves.

It was stated in a presentation: In order to survive the hard waves, organizations need to position themselves within a corporate network. In fact, these non-governmental organizations do not have a chance to survive in a single hard wave. Therefore, the better we build networks over certain tasks, the greater our chances of surviving against hard waves. In summary, these networks need to be established both to generate “synergy” and to cope with that hard wave in these hard times. Institutions that have thought about this issue should also cooperate.

Do we have a very good picture of this subject? Do we have well-functioning civil society networks and platforms in Turkey? Obviously there are not many. I know from Diyarbakır there are at least two communities. One is the Islamic NGO community, they have their own platforms. The rest of the secular community has other platforms, they are also fragmented.

As DiSA, we organize NGO meetings. We try to get together with major influential NGOs in Diyarbakır every three months. Our main concern is to establish a permanent dialogue between the institutions that contribute to the construction of the public space in Diyarbakır.

But we are not proceeding well. When an institution is in tare, that network cannot support it. Perhaps the networks can be established over these functions. For example, İHD is doing really good monitoring and accountability. They also have a serious knowledge. But maybe this should be combined with advocating. It is necessary to feed the actors who do the advocating and monitoring. The experience of eleven countries shows that consciously building synergy is increasing the power. So there is no suggestion that we should focus on a single job. I can say that this is actually a bad suggestion.

Participant: *It is hard to create the chain.*

Exactly. I leave the floor to you, please continue.

Participant: *Although I find the mediation issue very valuable, I think that NGOs do not fulfill or fail to fulfill this function in this peace process. Because in*

order to be able to mediate, there must be two parties of equal equivalence, or both sides have to see each other or accept that they exist.

State comes first among the segments we want to mediate in Turkey about conflict resolution and state should consider us as an equivalent of itself. It needs to acknowledge that we exist, or know that we exist in some way. But the state, I am talking about Turkey, does not accept the "others" in itself or does not even see them. Therefore, there is, even, no equivalent relationship between us. So mediation seems to me a bit like this: Yes, it would be very valuable and beautiful. Mediation was one of the main topics in all of those theories you talked about. The state's mechanism of existence and the main pillars on which it basically creates itself is already the power. The state does not see us equivalent to itself. Therefore, the issue of mediation, I think - though I do not want to draw a bad picture - will not take place in Turkey before two generations.

This was the point where I was basically stuck in nonviolent communication trainings before. You can mediate between people, you can establish mediation among individuals or communities, because basically both sides say: "I want to compromise or at least sit and talk about this issue because I want to be heard." But our issue here is about the state, and does the state want to hear or compromise with us? By us, I am talking about the others or other opposing groups and communities. Does it at least admit that we exist? First of all, we need to talk about this.

I do not fully agree with this framework. Because there is not just the kind of mediation you mentioned. For example, Nimet F. Beriker, who works on conflict resolution and mediation, talks about 24 different types of mediation models in a study she conducted on mediation. The type you're talking about is like the mediation in the role of arbitrator.

Participant: *Not at all actually.*

Let's give Ireland as an example. There is not exactly such an equality position in Ireland, but in a period when the conflict is very intense, we see that the priests contribute to peace by providing information flow to the parties. So there is no single model of mediation. As I understand, you are talking about a model that can have binding power over the parties, but this may not be the role of civil society alone in this issue. One of the mediation models you mentioned. I do not deny this. This type of mediation can be difficult. However, there are other models of mediation. Sometimes there may also be

just information flow. Sometimes the parties cannot speak openly in public because the environment is too harsh. In Northern Ireland, for example, this is very common. There may also be functions that ensure the flow of information between the parties.

Participant: *I don't use the issue of referee a lot. Why, because arbitration also creates another area of power. In other words, it means the person who makes the decisions sets the rules and ensures that those rules are controlled. It actually creates another power within itself. So what I'm talking about is not actually refereeing. If so understood, I'd love to correct it, because it turns into another power mechanism. According to me, in order to create a performance that is completely impartial, that stands at an equal distance to both parties and that can conduct this mediation issue properly, both sides must give consent or intend to do so.*

In Ireland, respectable people who can be influential on the other party can be preferred. In other words, names that appear close to one side of the conflict can sometimes act as mediators. But as I said, the issue of mediation is not limited to these. Nimet Hoca talks about 24 different types of mediation models on the basis of structure and process axes. The extreme point of this is the models in which the United Nations sends a military force, sends a peacekeeping force and intervenes. But there are also mediation models that only facilitate the flow of information between the parties and do not have any more power and role.

Participant: *I don't think that it is impossible to be pessimistic in this mediation issue, when we consider the experiences in Turkey and the Middle East. For example, during the 2013-2015 Resolution Process, such a climate was created that an atmosphere of peace emerged at once. Some delegations were formed and negotiations were held. In fact, you provide a basis and certain steps are taken, things happen spontaneously and naturally. Not so impossible things. There is a war in Syria since 2011. In Turkey, there are also very serious problems and political turmoil. There is a very contradictory and conflicting political process in the world. In fact, neither the Middle East and nor the world have the power to handle this. I think these are not very difficult issues anymore, and something can happen by taking some steps. One should also consider, is it such mechanisms that need to be solved or is it a state mentality? It should not be forgotten that even if there is a solution process, there is a state mentality in front of you. Maybe it was our biggest deficiency in the previous solution process. Here we have felt infinite confidence and accomplished some tasks with unlimited trust. Maybe we should look at it from this perspective.*

In political science, there is a question: "Where does the power of the state come from?" There is a big question: "What does the power of the state depend on, what are its sources of power?" Conflict theories, to which I am somewhat close, say: stick and consent. Gramsci explains this in terms of hegemony and force, Althusser analyzes with the category of ideological and oppressive apparatus of the state. Michael Mann calls the infrastructural power of the state and the despotic power of the state. Essentially, all these conceptualizations underline two forces: stick and consent.

Actually I mean violence by stick, oppression. The state actually takes the consent of the society through pressure and violence. Police, soldiers, courts and prisons constitute the oppression devices of the state.

The second source of power is consent. The state convinces you, wins your heart and brain. Michael Mann argues that all state formations consist of different combinations of stick and consent. Surely, he uses the concepts of despotic power instead of sticks and infrastructural power instead of consent. According to Mann, this is an equation whose sum is one. When the stick increases, consent decreases, when consent increases, the stick decreases.

The French thinker Pierre Bourdieu has an objection. He says that in fact there is consent in violence. When the state uses violence, if there is no group that consents to it, the state cannot use that violence. Therefore, the essence of the state is consent. The state actually performs to the extent that it can produce consent in the social structure.

When we take this as a basis, let me relate to the current discussion, if a "social consent for peace" cannot be produced, the actors who stand in favor of conflict will continue on their way. There is no escape from this. I think, here, the whole point is that civil society must produce a social consent about peace in the social field rather than dealing with mediation between the state and organization alone. I'm not just talking about negative peace here; the negative peace at least, yet if possible, the positive peace beyond it. How does civil society produce consent for peace? This is the main function of civil society: in the field. As a matter of fact, if we do not produce this consent, there is no permanent chance of peace. This is not very easy, it will probably take several generations to build peace. Negative peace may be a little earlier. A consensus can be reached on a political framework. I think the main issue of civil society is to consider producing this consent. We do not really consider this issue enough. If civil society can produce a social consent for peace, the policies and practices of violence on the Kurdish issue in Ankara cannot be implemented so easily.

Let me give Trustee as an example, a more extreme example. Indeed, if there was no common consent in society (in Edirne, İstanbul, İzmir, or even Diyarbakır -even here there is consent to a certain extent and within certain groups) the trustee could not be appointed so easily. There is an underlying consent from the bottom. And this consent also has many tools.

How does this consent mechanism work in our peace? There is widespread consent for war, conflict and the denial of Kurdish rights. How is another consent constructed against this consent? I think this issue will evolve into peace as long as we can produce consent for equality, rights, law and nonviolence.

This is something we are not successful with in civil society. We do not think much about producing this consent or spending our resources and energy on it. Jobs such as mediation are more attractive to many of the prominent institutions. It is more attractive to work towards power and power centers. For example, small efforts of turning a negative story of a victim of conflict into a positive twenty-year-old story don't motivate many people. We don't waste much energy. I can say that for a lot of examples.

This is not only true for civil society. You can add the political institutions, the media and the university as well. But as a matter of fact, I think the issue - though it will be repetitive - is essentially a matter of generating consent for positive peace in society, and some focus should shift here. There is actually a lot of work that can be done about this, despite all the repressive mechanisms of the state, we did not do, and we left incomplete.

Participant: *There is a handicap of starting with just such a perspective. To look at the society, that's what it should be, let's talk about Europe, at least in the European sense, where the legal foundations of civil society are laid. Or I am talking about the tradition of society that has come from the times when the collectivity spoke and the state did not flourish yet. The position of civil society is actually to reduce the space of the state, to enable the society to fulfill all its needs on its own and to realize this. Therefore, it is to be in a constant struggle for protection against the state. In this sense, there are perspectives that define political parties, unions, sects, that is, almost all formations that do not have state power as civil society. I am also somewhat close to such a perspective. Looking at the society is a political activity right now. Building social peace in this way means establishing a social movement that turns political parties, as we know, towards the people. I think this is the reason why look at consent studies in this sense. So there is no courage and determination to take the risks of it, at least in these movements that*

are and are being formed. As I said here, we have to make a choice to take a position from the beginning. The point is to radically produce consent regarding society, about peace. But this is a political activity. If we put aside the legal gaps and handicaps that can overcome this...

Does anyone want to speak? If not, maybe I can give an answer on a recent case.

Participant: *Let me say something, rather than an answer. I want to mention this. Before I came, I took a taxi. The driver asked: "Where are you going?" I said, "To DiSA," "What's up?" he said. "Be careful," he added, "These intermediate processes are troublesome," etc. In both societies, there is such an illegal point of view - fear maybe - regarding the process. I don't know if this is a digested policy or can it be handled differently.*

Let me give an extreme example now. One day we were discussing class distinction among Kurds; that is, the poor, and the rich. The last friend said: "Dear Cuma, what you call politics is a matter of fight. If the poor have an objection to what is happening in Diyarbakır, they will fight. They have no chance of getting their rights without fighting." I do not know much about the form, way and means of the fight. But this is the approach I take as a basis in politics. Civil society organizations are political actors. But I perceive this politics as inferior politics, not high party politics. Whether we call it sub politics, micro politics, or micro politics with a macro perspective, I don't know. After all, the definition I stand for in "politics" is essentially the competition of groups with different social interests. It takes effort.

If I remind you the rational choice theory, here is my point: this job actually includes you to the extent that it touches you negatively and positively in daily life. Politics is such an area. In a context like Turkey's, as a matter of fact, sometimes it requires to pay very heavy prices. In Turkey, in my opinion, the actors don't hesitate about paying a price about peace. For example, if you think in the context of Kurds, the price has been largely paid. I do not think there is a refrain from paying the price. In fact, the Kurds have a huge human resource, labor and mobilization. If you compare it with most cases, there is an enormous effort. I don't think people will hold back because of this.

I heard it on a panel, if we remind people in such cases, maybe it works. What will happen soon rather than the long story of the past or the very distant hope of the future? So what will we lose if we don't? People have to feel this, if we want to do something about it. Maybe we should see what is "coming," not what will be coming. Such cases are a bit like that. What are the things

we will lose if we don't? First, we have a chance to move forward regarding peace to the extent that we construct the issue in this way, or to the extent that we reframe it to the people in this way. Two, what are we going to obtain if we get ahead? I am not just saying this materially, both materially and symbolically. I think there is no problem of mobilization among the Kurds. The issue is another matter.

I wanted to draw attention to this point while recalling rational choice theory. Peace as a norm is a good thing, it should be explained to people. But on the other hand, we need peace as a rational choice so that we do not lose and get the following.

So how can we set up the issue like this, and what could be the means? Again, I can talk about data I collected from the field. The Kurdish issue has many macro subjects. We cannot reduce these macro issues to micro scale. When we don't step into the issues of the macro, what do we lose in the micro, what cannot we gain? Let me give an example. For example, we talk about autonomy a lot and cannot take a step. Because if you can establish how the autonomy issue is reflected in life, in a micro scale, for example, what would happen if İzmir and İstanbul became autonomous, let me choose a harder example, what would happen if Diyarbakır became autonomous? If the people of Diyarbakır manage 80% of the resources in Diyarbakır, how would the daily life of Diyarbakır and İzmir change? Or if we think the opposite, what happens if it doesn't?

For example, I can give Birecik's garbage problem. According to the law, the district municipality collects the garbage and the metropolitan takes it and disposes of it. Birecik is connected to Urfa, 110 km from the center. You take that garbage from there, bring it to the center for 110 km and dispose of it. But 30 kilometers from Birecik, there is Nizip under Antep. There is a regular landfill in Nizip. In other words, if Birecik takes the garbage to Nizip instead of Urfa center, the costs will decrease by one quarter, for example. Plus, in order to generate electricity from waste in Nizip, the daily waste must be at least 400 tons. Nizip's garbage is not enough for this, but if Birecik's garbage is removed, it exceeds 400 tons and you have the chance to generate electricity. Birecik continues to bring its garbage to Urfa, taking a distance of 110 km a day. Because, administratively, Antep is somewhere else, Urfa is somewhere else. Turkey's central dependent on a single type of local administrative structure does not allow such partnerships.

Let me give a second example. A friend of ours mentioned a river in the Aegean Region. The river flows from one city to another and creates pollution

in the third city, but the source of the pollution is irrigation activities in the other city. Unless you manage the environment and water issue considering the three provinces, you have no chance to deal with this issue.

Now, we are talking about the autonomy in the context of the Kurdish issue, conflict and weapons. So what will happen next, how will life change if there is autonomy? Maybe this is one dimension.

Let me also say this about courage and determination. Regarding this issue, I think two things are important: hope and trust in collective actors. If you have hope, you do job. I'm here today because it is my hope. I can sit at home at the weekend, on Saturday and have breakfast with my daughter and my wife, but I have a problem and I have hope that the problem will be resolved. I have not lost this hope yet. You must have hope. Civil society actors, or more broadly, all actors, including political actors, should do things that keep this hope alive, or should not do things that will destroy this hope. To the extent that civil society can keep the hope for change alive, it will be able to mobilize people.

Second, everyone knows his/her limits. The list of what I can do, as a person is very limited. But it is a bit broader when it is DiSA. Diyarbakır is slightly larger as a civilian community, or much larger as a part of the Kurdish objection; likewise, as a component of the democracy movement in Turkey. You must have confidence in the collective action processes of these collective actors.

So I think all civil actors can move forward as long as they can build the two, hope and trust, or keep the built ones safe. Sometimes people also break down what they have built. Sometimes you ruin hope, even though you don't want to or you can lose the confidence. We have to generate trust in the collective actors you are a component of and we have to work for generating hope.

After all, politics is the construction of our own daily life. At least that's how I look; we build our own life. For me politics is not doing business for others, it is for future generations. It is about today, it is politics to establish the present, to live the present, to be good today, do good things for the environment or to be a component of a good environment. It should not be coded as a dream to the other generation, as a job fifty years ahead.

I am not pessimistic, and we are already living in a good city, in Diyarbakır. Despite this whole story, I feel safe. I am a member of this community, Di-

yarbakır. I am not really saying this to agitate you. Despite all the bad stories we have had in the last few years, Diyarbakır is a city where I feel safe. Three years ago, it was like an apocalypse here. We all saw what happened in Sur. But I feel safer here after all. We are a little lucky in this respect. Although the belief, contribution and involvement of people in collectivity and sociality have taken some blows and regresses in the city we are in, it is a good place despite everything.

Let's end it here if you prefer.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIALIZATION IN-GROUPS AND PEACE CULTURE: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE CENTER OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Vivret Alevi

“Why nonviolent communication?” I want to answer the question based on my own biography. My name means “life, alive” in Latin. I am from the last generation in the Jewish community who has chosen their own names. After my generation, Turkish names were given to the people. No one exercised open pressure, but the Jews voluntarily chose it to protect their children. “Perla” has become İnci, “Yasef” has become Yusuf. For example, a relative of mine -he had a very nice name, if you ask me- when he started working as a mechanical engineer in a factory, went to the court and changed his name with a Turkish one. It took me a long time to get used to his name. In this country I experienced anti-Semitism as an unnamed reality.

However, I grew up in a middle-class minority society, in a very apolitical way. Now a super apolitical generation (similar to my situation then) has grown up; they don't know the social context in Turkey, do not recognize and understand their rights and freedoms, do not wonder or show interest to be informed about them, and do not respond to violence.

There was a place in Istanbul called Suadiye Beach, no road passes in front of it; it is not officially a beach now. While we were sunbathing in the summer of 1974, we started to read new magazines; Ecevit was chosen. A general amnesty was declared around the same time, those who were arrested on 12 March came out and immediately began to write, draw and discuss. I was young then. The atmosphere was lively and I became active with them.

I was a student in Germany at that time, so I moved to Germany but came back to Turkey frequently. There was a rapid social mobilization in Turkey. Martial law came before I understood what was going on. I started going to worker-immigrant associations in Germany, worrying about the state of our society with the question of how I could contribute. So I began to recognize people of Turkey in these associations in Berlin from where I grew up in Is-

tanbul's Şişli, Nişantaşı region. I finished school at the end of 1978, and then I returned. The time has passed quickly.

In 1980, Turkey has witnessed the destruction of a whole generation that was clever, intellectual, thinking and who had social concerns. It was destroyed physically, morally and emotionally. Those who did not go crazy, those who could find a job somewhere survived. But as a result, the social contribution of a generation that we would call intellectuals and academics was zeroed. I returned to Germany with the same speed as I had my share in the 80's and returned in 1987 when the military administration was transferred to civilian governments.

I want to give an example. I met a lecturer who showed an interest in nonviolent communication. He conducts academic studies on conflict resolution and peace in Hacettepe University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. While talking, I asked him: "You read political science, did your doctorate, how does it work, when political science is a castle of learning social thinking in Turkey? Haven't you taken human rights lessons?" I was so surprised by his answer, "Only Server Tanilli was giving that lecture in the university, and it was an elective course." He started university in 1987. That generation, who grew up after 1980 in Turkey could finish without learning the political profile of human rights. Later, among my participants, I came across those who had studied political science but did not take a human rights course.

Why am I telling you this? After 1980, a whole generation of intellectuals was neutralized in various ways. The generation that grew up after that, such as those who have attended nonviolent communication training so far are people who keep their nose clean. I see that they are clever, very valuable as a human being, but social consciousness is limited to social aid.

They tell stories like this: The families of the young people who went to university after the 80's, warned them with the message of: "Don't get involved in politics!" Can you imagine? The generation of our country who will read, write, understand the world, think about events, find solutions and make contributions are sent to universities in this way. So we can understand, why there is a great apolitical view from Ankara to the West.

Let me come back to my story. I was shaken otherwise. We were talking about a generation of "revolutionaries" who were struggling, trying to save the world. When I consider the people who got over the violence in custody

or prison and who have been able to get out of prison (people who did not go crazy, I know some of them; for example, a father had been tortured and beaten very hard, then he became mentally sick and terrorized the family) without any prejudice, I saw that old “comrades” participated in life (some very important figures became the owners of the construction companies of Turkey) and lived in harmony with the existing system and politics. Your friends from localities, that is, from here, can now use their old comrades as cropper by using their feudal relations. Friends from your region, whose roots are here, via their feudal relations, used their comrades now as a cropper.

It was easy to judge and try to get out of it, but I had to ask the following question: How come these valiant ones who can set out for such lofty values and sacrifice their lives for this cause become a part of the system they were completely opposed to when the conditions changed? This question kept me very busy.

I was so disappointed that I came to this point: “When two people came together it created danger; power, force and violence cannot produce anything else.” I withdrew completely from the social sphere and returned to my family completely, gave birth to my child, became a housewife. Indeed, it is also a very important experiment. When dealing with such big issues, people forget about life itself. The life of the activist is to be active from early morning to late night. In other words, connection with the lives of “normal” people can be completely cut off. After that, we can think of a superior person. There is such a danger.

I was a student in Berlin, a refugee, and an immigrant. I had different forms of experience abroad with different statuses. I studied political science during my refugee period. Free University of Berlin (FU) is an institution where many famous political science professors give lectures. This way, I had time to understand and digest my past experiences.

When politics started to stir again in Turkey, after 1987, I realized that the old stuff repeats itself as the cartoons of themselves. What I mean by cartoon is a dark comedy, questioning whether we have learnt anything from the experiences. The think tank, which we would call the intellectuals of this country, were raked and we have not taken a lesson from it. I said to myself, things done by two people are harmful anyway; so I retreated to my home.

My aim for telling in detail is to prepare a ground for the question, “why

nonviolent communication?” Because I want to investigate how nonviolent communication can contribute to the problems of the region.

I encountered nonviolent communication when I came into conflict with my son’s father while I was raising a child, far away from social life. He is German. I discovered the phrase then: “disagreements do not have a nation.” A German intellectual could also perpetrate violence against women. Eventually, I was in search of a solution to continue and organize our lives as a family, as the mother and father of this child. I had heard of nonviolent communication before, but the need was new born.

I bought a book, *Nonviolent Communication, A Language of Life*. I was planning to learn the method and reestablish the previous communication I interrupted with my son’s father. I read the book all in one breathe and said there is something very valuable here. At the same time, the thought of “if I can do this job, I can dare to re-establish dialogue with people,” arose in my head. As I finished the book, I took action and went to a mediator. This is how my nonviolent communication adventure started.

My practices started working. Even though I did it mechanically, it contributed to my communication. I found the process very precious. It seemed that this could help not only my private life, but also the social gathering that had been my heart’s trouble before. If we can manage to communicate that way, peace can be possible among people.

You see, when I’m talking about peace, I’m talking about starting to take steps, not big solutions. People can start talking to each other. This offers us a way to get people with different opinions, beliefs and orientations gather around a table and listen to each other. Marshall B. Rosenberg, who developed the nonviolent communication approach, has a booklet on the application of the method for social transformation: *The Heart of Social Transformation*. We plan to translate it too.

During the time allocated to me, I just spoke, you were silent. Please take the floor when you can’t listen. Let’s use our time like this.

Participant: *First of all, thank you very much for your presentation. It was very impressive and this one caught my attention. You asked very correct questions. I believe the right questions are always important. You said I asked a question, how did this happen?*

If I was just asking these questions alone, I would say, “Damn it, nothing will change.” That’s when I retreated to my cave. I went to college. I read ideology criticism, history of religions and societies, feminist criticism etc.

Marshall asked the question too. He died in 2015 at the age of 80. If I am giving my presentation with an open heart, I owe it to his pure humanity. You will understand when you read it. He is Jewish, they immigrated to Detroit in America in the 40s. Detroit is an American city where a large worker segment exists; Ford is there. They moved to Detroit when he was a child, race clashes broke out on the second day of their move. They stayed at home for three days and he witnessed the death of forty people. When he goes to school, he witnesses that a person can also be tormented because of his name. This story is written in the book.

“I learned the Detroit jargon of violence,” says Marshall. At the same time, “I had a grandmother. “She would welcome everyone who knocked on the door, welcomed them as long as they needed, shared food with them, prepared a mattress for them and danced with them,” he tells in his stories. That’s why Marshall B. Rosenberg asks the question more meaningful to me: “What happens to people that some of them stay in touch with this compassionate nature and are able to preserve it even under the most difficult conditions? And on the other hand, what happens to other people that they learn about violence?” “Violence is learned,” he says.

Compassion exists in our nature. These are the basic assumptions of nonviolence. I say assumption because you can object. Freudian psychology says that human nature is aggressive. Therefore, s/he must be trained. We come from an education system built on this idea. In other words, since the human being is a harmful and violent creature, s/he must be tamed by being trained and educated and adapted to the culture.

This is the first assumption of nonviolent communication: “Human nature is empathic.” Brain science has proven that empathy is potentially present in our nature with the discovery of mirror neurons today. In other words, what is given in our nature is thriving, taking shape or blunting in the society, family and culture we were born into. Imagine that you are a seed. You fell to the ground. If you have fallen on a barren land; no water, no fertilizer, windy hill, what comes out of that seed from there? In another land, you gave fertilizer and you cut the water, the wind. The full potential of that core is revealed. Here we bring the potential for compassion, we learn about violence.

I found it very attractive. So I wanted to focus on this question: How should we create the environment of this human seed so that it can flourish, reveal its full potential? This question became attractive to me; I quickly devoted myself and started learning nonviolent communication.

In 2004, I learned that the book was translated into Turkish. My home and my child were in Germany. We came to Turkey once a year in order to see my relatives like an immigrant. When the book was printed in Turkish, I took it as my duty to be the first Turkish-speaking non-violent communication instructor. I began to travel to Turkey to promote nonviolent communication.

I was very impressed when I read that Marshall was mediating in Serbia, Israel, Palestine and Rwanda in the 1990s. I was most impressed by his posterior studies about the massacres between Hutu and Tutsi. That's when I hoped for the first time that dialogue would be possible between societies that killed each other. Of course, I asked Marshall in detail: "How can you bring tribes that slaughtered each other or having feuds among them in a room? Do you make connection between them and do they get along with each other?" For about a year before, they worked with the two tribes separately on nonviolent communication and listened to people's pain with empathy. So there have been long preliminary studies for them to come together. When they came together, in the end of the mediation process, they said to Marshall, "Come and teach this method to our people." In the session this morning, there were questions like: "If we have a mediation, will it be okay?" This could be the beginning of a long process.

When I heard this, the first thing that came to my mind was: "I can start contacting people this way again." As I explained, in that very difficult period when I said zero communication with people is good communication, I was left alone in the world. As I said, people can go crazy and commit suicide. While I was reducing my communication to zero, I was also thinking of learning the methods and contribute to living together in peace with our varieties and differences. For example, in this country, people can easily be cursed as Armenians and nobody is startled. We do not know human rights and freedoms so much that we are not afraid of their violation. It's a matter of education; it's about doing new and peaceful experiments. I was convinced that big ideologies could not be dealt with. Therefore, it is very attractive for me to support NGOs with nonviolent communication.

How is it to be an individual? What is individual responsibility? And how would it be to act, contribute to change and transformation with my inner

motivation brought about by individual responsibility? When we don't do this, even though we are organized, if our awareness is weak, if we do not know how to choose, it will be easy for us to be manipulated and directed. In fact, while I wanted peace at heart, I was able to sympathize with some armed, revolutionary ideas. Looking back now, I see this: If we are not sound as individuals, we cannot go beyond being the executor of the truths of others.

This is actually like sowing grass at the base; you plant it, it spreads from there. Nature turns green. You could not reproduce by tugging. The way to green is to multiply and spread the grass. I cannot green the whole area at once, but I start working for contribution to life by taking the initiative where I am, in my position. For me, the most important principle of nonviolence is to take action to create whatever I care about, cherish and miss. When you are against something, you again take sides, create enemies; it is better to act to meet my needs instead of waging war on those I don't want.

Here we need very profound learning and paradigm shift in our mental conditioning. Marshall talks about ten thousand years of patriarchal culture created by human beings. Humanity's problems cannot be explained solely by this 200-year-old modern capitalism. We are born into a power culture that is possible with the reward and punishment system created. All of our cultural conditioning is based on our internalization of the mechanisms that legitimize power. Stuck in the dilemma of either being cruel or a victim, a person seeks shelter for himself. He seeks a power that will reward his loyalty by obeying the side he thinks will protect him and guarantee his security. The one who is under the power of another also takes sides.

For this to happen, a person must be disconnected from his own nature. Instead of focusing on what he needs, he goes through the oppression of fear and education, breaking away from his own reality and submitting to the truths imposed on him. Although sometimes rebellious, in both cases the two sides of the same coin are in a power struggle. If he wins he is rewarded, if he loses he is punished. Then this is happening, provided there are authorities to tell what is right and what is wrong. The only condition for this is to break our ties with ourselves. So when we lose our intuition and stop thinking, we surrender to power. This starts with our mother and father. Look at our family system, small states, then our schools. Then the business world, the institutions we go to. The situation of political organizations is the same. The survival of rulers requires only one condition: people who are not self-confident, who follow to the truth of others, who have lost their power.

For example, everyone asks the idea of someone who knows the subject. Asking the right person who knows it. These are very ingrained behaviors in our culture. We take a break from doing this during our adolescence period and rebel. Our system consists of the tides between submission and revolt. If we cannot rebel against power, we obey the power. When circumstances change, we use our power against others. So we don't know how to get together and collaborate. All we know is power struggles. We have ten thousand years of deep experience about this subject. I cannot limit this to one region. We said region, area, but this is human culture. At the same time, fortunately, we all have the necessary potential to be human in terms of needs.

And we lost compassion, we forgot about cooperation, with the rupture of the relation with ourselves because of the training we are going through. Nonviolent communication reminds us of our humanity; this method does not teach you anything new that you do not know. Look, how many beauties were there in our cultures for humanity. You could find that in Islam. But the Islam we encounter today has become a worldly system for power. Who was Jesus? Jesus was one of the revolutionaries of his time. What happened then? The Catholic Church established the Vatican, the state of the papacy in Rome. How is it working? It turned into a system of punishment and reward that work with sin, heaven and hell. There is a spiritual existence, but organized religions cause us to break away from it. Let's come back to power, all systems of power, whichever you look at, for example, in the kingdom, kings derive their authority and power from religion and God. Therefore, they represent the truths of God. All the systems they have established like law, justice, etc have been structured on punishment and reward. You can see that in the current state and party system in our country today.

For example, it draws my attention that there is a big complaint about allegiance. "We obey." I say let's discover ourselves, where do we obey? Where do we shift from our center? How can we reconnect with the source of our strength? We are very powerful beings as humans. So the potential is very high in our core, we are very powerful. However, we are educated more than enough. We have been tamed in the full sense of the word. It is very desirable to be tamed. If only our decency was erased, we could reach the consciousness to choose the right thing for us with our nature, intuition, mind and heart.

This nonviolent communication approach has been the most effective method I know to learn. It is a simple, learnable, applicable, practical and reinforced method.

You work with NGOs. We also have an association of seventeen people. You know, it takes seventeen people to establish an association. We established it to take advantage of being a legal entity when it is needed to participate in a project. It is a very requirement driven association. We have various communities. Namely, friends who are keen on parenting come together and support parents. When this is done, its mission is complete and the group is finished. You see, the same friends are getting together with another group of people elsewhere, for another topic.

This is what I'm talking about: new forms of organization. In the form of nets, intangible, invisible, yes or no, this is a very valuable working tool, because the 21st century is the age of networks. This has both a physical and a spiritual basis. We live in ties with each other. Look ecologically; we use paper cups here easily. "When we can talk about Diyarbakır's problems, are we going to talk about ecology?" There are resource wars behind Diyarbakır's problems. There are wars in the world to reach raw material resources. As a part of this, this region is connected to the world in every way. We are so interconnected to each other; the 21st century is the age when we are beginning to see the results of this at full speed.

To understand this - I don't like to use it a lot - we need to improve our personal development. We have to develop ourselves as individuals. We have to be individuals; because really, there is no one to save us anymore but us. When we start to understand this point, we begin to take our responsibility. For example, in Turkey what we mostly miss is individual responsibility. What happened after 1980? Look at all the educated intellectuals. The old paradigm quickly restored itself.

You know, America is the first colonial country but the most unremarkable one. There were indigenous peoples of that land. European immigrants came starting from 1492. Who was domestic, who was foreign, it turned inside out. Indigenous people have recently formed their organizations, and they are seeking to keep up with the times, more than their own traditions. I would like to read you a part of the manifesto that Hopi nation elders read in 2002 when we entered the new age:

Now there's a river that flows so fast

So big and enthusiastic that some of us will fear it

And they'll try to hold on to the beach

And they'll stay apart and suffer so much

*Know now that this river has its own destiny
The old people say we had to leave the beach
Throw ourselves in the middle of the waters
We should have kept our eyes open, heads up
See who's been there and celebrate*

*It not the time to take anything personal
Especially not at all to care about ourselves
When we do that, our growth and journey stops
Lonely wolf's age has passed
Gather up, take the fight out of your attitude and words
We should do everything we do
Divinely and with celebration*

We are what we've been waiting for

Hopi Nation Elders, 24 March 2002

Participant: *You talked about great leaders, people who perceive their success as the success of the groups they serve, and these power relations... Indeed, in our age, people are stuck in their daily and unproductive gains. Shame is felt when we serve the well-being, success of others, which are actually huge gains. You can't cross the ocean if you don't dare to give up the beach. What it reminds me of, as we have said, as individuals we are mostly alone. One should use the self-criticism and self-control mechanisms, question her/his past, start from himself, and then have the right to speak to his environment. Here, as one of the friends has said, people have to give up some things, maybe most things, maybe their lives. Not necessarily for a benefit.*

Not for benefit but for an aim, do you mean?

Participant: *I don't know the culture of that place very much, but there is also the aim of giving a lesson to the next generation, younger generation. Getting into the stream there, standing upright and walking. The stream flows more violently, but still advises not to fight. So I see resistance, but there is no self-sacrifice. Despite that strong current, your head is upright and you are walking in the flow. So on the one hand, there is resistance, but there is no fight. Surely there is a self; there is also a self-consciousness. But they go with the current without getting caught in that current. Therefore, from the very beginning of your presentation, we go under and rise above the power. But maybe there is no unlimited peace there. There is a constant state of conflict. But with the simultaneous solution of this, I understand something like living a life together, knowing what we are, knowing what we are up against. But with the simultaneous solution of this, I understand something like living a life together, knowing who we are and what we are against.*

“We are what we’ve been waiting for all this time.” The time to wait for a savior has passed. Go with the flow of life and hold your head high and celebrate. Don’t fight; celebrate. This is how I understand. Thank you for your attention.

So far I have described in a frame how I see nonviolent communication. I have said little about nonviolent communication itself. While I was studying about it, a friend made a small film for eight minutes. He asked me what is nonviolent communication. I also gave an interview. Let’s watch it together.

THE ACTION OF LOVE - NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION, SHORT FILM³

Vivet Alevi: Nonviolent communication is actually the art of living in the heart. In other words, to fully express the life that is alive in us, with honesty and open-heartedness. At the same time, trying to understand the living life in the people in front of us, wondering and trying to connect with them.

We live in an age where life flows very fast and we think fast solutions are necessary. People are solution oriented. Ah, if that happened, quickly, quickly... We produce discord and conflict very quickly in this way. Nonviolent communication invites us to connect from solutions. It says slow down a little, wait a minute. Before we come up with a solution, let’s see what we need! Let’s hear each other at that level of needs. Let’s put the needs of the other person in front of us and find new solutions relating these needs. So, it invites creativity.

3 <https://vimeo.com/299853321>.

Özgen Saatçılar (Center of Nonviolent Communication Certified Trainer Candidate): What we do in nonviolent communication is actually communication, to tell our hearts, to express our wishes, to take actions to meet our needs. For this, we need to express ourselves. Maybe in some cases we may not be able to speak, we may not be able to say what is going inside us. Then we have support groups. Nonviolent communication is something learned with the community. There are always home groups, peer systems; we are always together in annual trainings and seminars.

Vivet Alevi: In some cases, we can get very angry. In our lives, we either suppress our anger or we may sometimes become aggressive. We are unhappy in both, our health is damaged, our blood pressure rises and we stay without any solution. If we are feeling something - and feeling is very important - these emotions warn us. Anger is one of the greatest stimulants, it says "wake up," when the adrenaline suddenly rises, because a precious need in your body is not being met at that moment, and it pumps adrenaline to mobilize you to meet this need. If I shout, call and explode, I will blame the other side, I will attack the other side. Again, I cannot reach my need again. That's why we say notice your anger like all emotions. Nonviolent communication is an awareness exercise. How do I feel when something happens to me? What's happening to me? Which emotions are awakening in me? Recognizing them and not wasting them, not suppressing them, but connecting with the needs these emotions want.

Özgen Saatçılar: What I have learned in nonviolent communication and what touches my heart the most is own our strength. Using power together, not power over it and to use protective power when necessary, to do this with the compassion in our hearts.

Vivet Alevi: Learning nonviolent communication is done by experimenting and practicing it. Imagine you are learning a foreign language. If you learn English, spending some time with it and learning its grammar and vocabulary will help you speak the language. We also work with emotion vocabulary in nonviolent communication. We have long lists of emotions. In the same way, we work with the needs lists to improve the emotion vocabulary. This language has a vocabulary as well as some sentence patterns. Those who came to work said, "Nobody talks like that." Yeah, right, nobody talks like that. Nobody speaks English like in grammar books, but it is useful to learn grammar rules to learn the language. Learning nonviolent communication is something like that.

Gonca Fide (Nonviolent Communication Basic Education Program Participant): Nonviolent communication showed me how life can improve when I stay in touch with the vitality in me. That's why I am grateful.

Alper Süzer (Nonviolent Communication Basic Education Program Participant): In my decision-making moments, it did not only make me think about the consequences of this decision and the benefits of it, but also made me realize which of my needs would be met when taking that decision.

Vivet Alevi: Reading is not sufficient for learning this method. Many people read. After that, they attend a seminar, a workshop. "Oh, it's not like it's written in the book, it's changed a lot," they say. Because this is something learned by living. Experimental learning is very important. Therefore all friends share nonviolent communication and offer the workshops. Maybe this can be a good way; you can go to an exercise evening and get acquainted with it.

Those who encounter nonviolent communication are asking. This giraffe, and the coyote, what are they about? All people are coyotes and all people are giraffes. We are all full of judgmental thoughts; we come from such a formation. We have patterns and cultural conditionings. That's why we are all jackals. But we also all have hearts, empathy, potential and therefore we are all giraffes. What we do is a work of recalling our compassionate nature.

Alper Süzer: As I connected with myself and take care of myself, my connection with people has also increased, deepened; I was very impressed that the way to people has passed through me.

Burcu Uçaray Mangıtlı (Center of Nonviolent Communication Certified Instructor): There are wars in the world. People do not know how to deal. I have a tool, a method, an attitude, and an approach, which has enriched my life. When we address our needs, we can agree. I experience and witness this everywhere I share it. People open their hearts and they experience a radical change of things when they connect with each other. They don't need to fight anymore.

If we can direct our attention to the needs, it is possible for us to meet in a brand new area beyond the right and the unfair. Marshall B. Rosenberg, who shared the method with us and brought it to us, would commemorate Mevlana with silence. There is a place beyond right and wrong, let's meet there. Nonviolent communication is such an invitation.

QUESTION, ANSWER AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *Mrs Alevi, the thing we choose, does it respond to our needs? What kind of thinking should we have in practice in our daily life in terms of needs?*

We do it like this in life, whatever happens to us, our minds work like this: We evaluate and judge immediately. This is the way our mind works. When we come to the judgment, it is either true or wrong or it is good-bad, normal-abnormal, right-unfair. In particular, we immediately determine the right-unfair issue, immediately choose sides and enter into conflict. When we enter the conflict, if we have the power we go to the top according to the area where the conflict is. We are looking for ways to use our power over others. If we can't, we retreat. So we climb down. Then we get revenge.

While talking about Galtung, the "win-win" part, which is mentioned a lot in mediation, was dealt with. As we know, you either win or lose. Our attention has focused on who is just, who is right, who says what. This is a conflict zone and a dead end. It is rising with a similar dynamic, from small domestic fights to international wars. When you say ten thousand years of culture, there are very, very deep and memorized behaviors around here.

Nonviolent communication invites you to draw your attention from who is right/wrong, who is right/unfair to the needs of people. Needs are the common ground where humanity meets. When we talk about the qualities we call needs anywhere in the world, everyone can connect immediately.

There are lists of needs in every language; Chinese, Japanese, Russian etc. When friends who share nonviolent communication put these concepts in front of people, they start to understand each other. So they were fighting before and then when they have started to ask, "Is this what you need? Did you do these actions to meet these needs?" they started to make connections and started to say, "Can we find a way that won't hurt me while addressing this need?"

Needs are life motivation within us, it's one of the basic assumptions. We do everything we do in life to meet a need. The motivation for the action of all people; every move we do, from sleeping to fighting, is done to meet our needs. However, our awareness of need is zero. According to Marshall B. Rosenberg, no one taught him the needs until he came to college, nor during his psychology education.

We do not know our feelings either. Especially in the 20th century, emotions became taboo. "Don't be emotional, be objective, be logical!" - we grew up with these commands. However, our most valuable sign is emotions, informing us of our needs. Do you know how it works? The living life that flows within us, that we call need. If we breathe, if we stand up every day and spend our day, these are possible because we nurture these qualities that we call need. And we meet an incredible number of needs. We may be meeting these with cultural habits. If we can move from power struggles to cooperation, that is, to join forces, to use power together, we can make peace. My consciousness of needs is my power source. For example, my inner living is experiencing an incredible thirst right now. My body reports that it needs fluid with a feeling of thirst. All feelings stimulate just like this feeling of thirst. For example, we are startled, we are filled with joy, and we are surprised. All these emotions are very precious because they inform the needs of our inner life.

"Don't be emotional!" When we say this, we think that our feelings are not wanted and we separate from them, so from ourselves. The education we received is nourished by the commands like "Be smart!" etc and most importantly, this power culture, in which we live, continues its existence with reward and punishment. If you do what I say - count the awards, there are awards according to your age. There is a kiss if you do what your mother says or there is a punishment if you don't. We have developed such a super, weirdly rich culture about punishment that it is unlimited. We are not so aware that sometimes we fall for a trick, but we do not wake up at that moment. You go home in the evening. "What happened to me today? I am frankly deceived. How am I duped, how am I tricked!" you say. If we do not have that much soberness, we eat, swallow, lie on it, we do not realize, but our blood pressure is getting high, we develop heart disease over time etc. We are not so much aware that sometimes you are deceived; you do not wake up at that moment. You are going home in the evening. "What happened to me today? I officially ate the stake. How did they deceive me, how could I stand up!" you say.

After all, then our attention is not on what we need. However, awareness of need is something that develops our empathy. For example, we gave nonviolent communication training for 19 days at the Directorate of Women and Family Affairs in a city last week. I asked the group: "What was beneficial for you?" The most common answer was, "I realized I had needs!" Those women studied at the university, all of them were successful in their profession. They say, "I was constantly doing what was expected of me. I was not aware that I had needs." This is so normal, if you are conditioned to do what is expected

from you in the culture. If you do not have an awareness of what you are doing, why you do it, whether it meets your needs or not, it will be very easy to manage you. I do not separate myself from any human in Turkish society regarding this issue, although I have a high education, it is a long journey of learning and growth to separate my cultural conditionings and select the appropriate things for myself.

How has this society been divided in such various ways? We are divided simply according to the strategies. In that sense, if I go back to the beginning, the focus of nonviolent communication is to realize: "What are your needs? And look at the strategies you've chosen to meet those needs." For example, I wanted water to satisfy my liquid need. Imagine that I always meet this with beer. Imagine me drinking beer whenever I am thirsty, wouldn't I be an alcoholic in the end? I have some acquired strategies: This is the strategy of need! We can spread this word in every aspect of our lives. We have learned memorization, culturally conditioned strategies.

The technique of nonviolent communication is four steps. Notice what happened, how do you feel, what do you need and which action can you take to meet this need? That's it: we are talking about a method consisting of observation, emotion, need and desire. Realize your need and take a concrete step. What we call action, take the responsibility of your need and act. Which one of us knows how to take responsibility for our needs? In daily life, we do not take responsibility for our feelings by saying, "I will offend her/him if I say this now, s/he will be offended if I do this," but we take the responsibility of the feelings of the other person. We give up on ourselves. Good news is that this can change a lot, because the brain is learning. You know if you repeat something forty times it happens. Truly our brain works like that. Your awareness increases if you practice something new. At first, for example, they say, "How are we going to learn them?" They are memorizing emotions, lists of needs in their hands. We work for a long time. Finally, we have a concentrated retreat. Once we went to a hotel. They do not realize it, but they made an empathic guess in a fluent way. The lists were not checked. This is in our nature. It's an education about returning to our nature and it means something similar to this: It looks very simple, but it hits a very basic place and it provides very fundamental change and transformation.

You work in NGOs. You are active people. Imagine that you have really learned and internalized this method. People are affected when you experience this wherever you are. For example, we are two or three nonviolent educators, and when we talk among ourselves, the people are surprised and ask, "How

do you speak like that!" "How calm you are!" they say. "Am I calm?" I ask, without being aware of it.

Once they said, "We fought this much, you never got uncomfortable." Well of course, why should I be disturbed? For me, it carries the chance of agreement and communication within what we call conflict. However, there is another cultural thing called "disturbance of peace." By saying that, we do not take the issue. Since we do not conflict, we become murderers afterwards. For example, there are very dangerous words such as "never mind," "do not mind," "handle it" in Turkish. Nothing goes by guys. It accumulates, and then the man pulls the knife after the last straw and chops. Indeed, behind these exuberances and outbursts there is the accumulation of our feelings that are not taken seriously.

Participant: *Another point is, we especially see in the main news bulletins, the man seems to have a valid reason, like his madness. That comes in an instant...*

What comes out at that instant is actually our disagreements that we have not expressed before, the feelings we keep in us. We do not share phrases like: "This issue did not suit me, because this need of me is not being met," so we keep quiet, collect our feelings inside and then explode.

When we meet our needs, when we connect with them, we become clear, we know what we want. Our biochemistry, hormones change in our body. We calm down. These are now thankfully traceable on brain scanning devices. It was like we were talking about mystical things before. We never conflict at the level of needs. We clash on the basis of strategies. For example, everyone needs to move. But a car is not required for this; we can walk, ride a bike, use public transport and taxi options. For example, there may be a dispute between the party that says, "I need a car," and those who say, "No, it's better to use public transport," and we can try to be right. But nobody argues that people need action. Basic distinction: what is the need? What are the strategies you chose to meet that need? Strategies are ways learned through cultural conditioning. With creativity, we can find new and more effective strategies.

Participant: *Are you open to suggestions? We can practice for ten minutes on the example, if it is ok for you? Could we at least talk about a case study regarding the emotions and what needs appear from those emotions?*

Since I have no hope that anything happens in such a short demo, but maybe, let's take a break first and think about it. Is there anything you would like to announce? For example, you can share a topic that burns in you. I can listen to you this way, with empathy.

Participant: *When it comes to nonviolent communication, okay, I'll be aware of that. I take care of my needs. Then I try to empathize etc. Well, doesn't it matter to demand it mutually? Because you can't solve everything alone.*

I'm going back to where I have started. I learned this nonviolent communication to be able to parent with my son's father. As I said, he's someone who broke my ribs, and after that I was the one who went to therapy. At some point in the process, I said, "Zero communication is great communication." I want to come exactly to that point. Let me briefly tell my story. I took care of my son, etc. we organized everything very well. I didn't have to see my son's father. He was picking up my son from the external door. I did not even see his face. He was leaving my son at a certain time. I had a legally organized zero communication system. But my son grew up. The thought that you will control the flow of life is a mistake. I think it was three or five years after our separation, my son came one day, he said, "I want to see my father more as I do with you." He was going on weekends. What should I have done? Either I would say, "Son, I know what's good and right for you. Your father is a bone-breaker, you can't go," or I'd respect my son's needs. Then I should look for a solution. Before learning about nonviolent communication, it was important to respect my son's wishes and needs according to my pedagogical knowledge. Meanwhile, someone gave me the book *Nonviolent Communication*. There are exercise groups in Berlin, I started going. We met for two hours in the evening. I was telling. For example, "We will go to the primary school teacher with his father tomorrow, the man will talk there, he will humiliate me," etc. I counted my complaints. In the group, they listened to me with empathy and supported me in finding my needs. Then I would say, "He's my enemy, I never empathize." Someone has played the father with role-plays. I watched and learned to empathize with it. The father is unaware of nonviolent communication. I was preparing myself to avoid behavioral disorders when we met.

I remember once, I was prepared for an A to Z interview in the practice group. I had been practicing nonviolent communication for six months now. I met the father and we started talking. I was mechanically speaking, "When you say..., I feel... because I need...". Before I could finish my sentence, "Have you learned new psychological games to manipulate me!" he said. Can you im-

agine? I had been attending a course for six months to talk to the man? I sat down and expressed myself honestly without criticizing him. "I'm talking with this method because I don't want to fight anymore," I said. It's as if one man went and another came. After that, he started to respect my communication.

I have always resolved our conflicts through nonviolent communication. We were parents together at that point. I learned to hear his attacks and his behaviors, which I considered as rudeness in the past, as violent expressions of his needs he could not meet and not to take it personally. However, I did not tolerate any behavior. I kept in touch until I announced my needs and got them observed, and all of them were verbal, emotional and always nonviolent.

Participant: *Have you started to see the missing points?*

I stopped quarreling with the points. I gave up the idea of correcting him and making him a man. He has his own truths. I expressed it when these did not suit me. My following needs are not met and I want them to be taken care of. Together, I chose to create solutions that will take care of all of our needs. I always cooperated and he came to cooperate with me. This happened before he learned what nonviolent communication is. My son has grown up. With whom do you celebrate when your child finish their license? Naturally, the person you will share with all your heart is his father. I picked up the phone, I said: "Come, let's have a champagne in the honor of the boy." Since then, we celebrate my son's birthday, feasts, etc. together. When I gave up my love of correcting him, I became immensely liberated. Stop fighting someone and take action to fulfill your wishes! To act in the responsibility of your own needs. You can have infinite empathy. This does not mean to approve and accept what has been done. My motto is one hundred percent empathy, zero tolerance. Understanding with empathy the need of those who propose this action rather than fighting over actions. Expressing our own needs, producing suitable solutions for both parties' needs. It is necessary to be clever, to be creative. It takes a while, of course.

The needs are within us. It is not dependent on abstract life energy, events or actions from outside. It is also our common ground shared by all people. Conflict is inevitable when we mix the needs with the actions we choose to meet them.

Participant: *There are natural but not necessary needs and there are needs that are neither natural nor necessary. One can always feel, desire something. What is interesting, what is natural and essential is both very cheap and unlimited. What are natural and essential needs? Shelter. One can sleep in a nice house, and quite another way too. You can perform this activity unlimitedly. Natural and non-essential needs are some comfort, a better home, a better meal... Neither natural nor necessary needs are perhaps very limited, but we can see them as an unlimited need. It touches on such an interesting contradiction. The process of satisfying natural and essential needs is unswerving. Therefore, a happy life can be lived, but as long as other needs are pursued, in a constant search, up and down. Secondary, tertiary needs correspond to what you define as strategy. In that respect, a bond can be established.*

In the US there is Martin Luther King Jr.'s black movement. He organized mass movements that broke the rules of racism in the US, and these were nonviolent actions. Police, guns, all kinds of pressure came upon these people, some died. We also don't know the history. We are limited to familiar strategies, stuck in vicious circles. Cuma Çiçek cited in his notes: "Violence breeds violence, violence is a spiral." In other words, when we don't stay away of it, we become the ones who produce violence, that is, we become part of the problem. We have choices, of course. We can continue to face violence with violence. Humanity has done this throughout its history and continues to do so. We are already in this spiral or we will do something else.

Participant: *Marshall mediated between Hutu and Tutsi in Sudan, and this is also an example. Are there any examples of nonviolent communication used in inter-communal relations in the world now, are you a part of any?*

Sure there is. However, I just feel ready for this kind of work. The state made peace with the Maoist guerrillas in Nepal.⁴ As we talked about negative peace, here it was made, but the country was divided, indeed the social wound and trauma was huge. Then, as Cuma Çiçek mentioned, the process of creating a culture of peace started. Nonviolent communication trainers, who especially focused on reconciliation, worked to make peace, that is to say repair the damage. The work done with nonviolent communication and restorative circle practices is very sensitive. Generally, it is very difficult work to film them. For example, a movie was shot in Nepal, then it was contested. Then they looked at all the movies and scanned them. Because you create an atmosphere of trust, people open their hearts to each other, pouring out

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqAzOydKXgg>.

their pain and the poison in them. Indeed, the deepest wounds are being talked about. Trust is very important in this kind of work. When I open my heart, will the privacy of it be protected? Will it be taken care of? Therefore, our material is very little. You work with families, husbands and wives, they don't want it either. Usually we have very little audio and visual recording.

Participant: *It's like the concept of restorative justice.*

We are not talking about justice, but about repairing, healing, and really reconciling the wound that they call reconciliation, because compromise is another concept.

Participant: *Healing...*

Yes, it can be healing. They did such a study for six days. They made a camp with people who were involved in this conflict, and there this documentary film came out.

Did I tell you that? As of September 2, I retreated on my own. I fulfilled the mission I chose to promote nonviolent communication and nonviolent communication training for the trainers in Turkey. You now have six certified trainers. I no longer need to continue what I have done so far. So I take a little back step and determine what to do next; I want to clarify the points I want to focus my attention, energy and time with nonviolent communication. Social peace has always been my main theme. I wanted my skills, in this field, to improve a little, because it is very important to be able to stay firm and in the center when it comes to hot conflict. In this retreat, what I will focus on is collecting materials or learning which material is available for social peace. Who has done what kinds of contributions in this field? If you noticed I am a practitioner, not a theorist. I abandoned the theories I cared about in my past life after the age of fifty. I want to do practical, direct things. Nonviolent communication helps me with this.

Participant: *Our region is at the center of great upheavals. You know a nonviolent solution...*

It is so hard to imagine, isn't it?

Participant: *It is both difficult and you are faced with accusations from pacifism to many others. There are concerns about the interruption of the struggle and pacification. Therefore, it can be discussed a lot among individuals,*

but I cannot see the possibilities of a nonviolent communication in social struggles.

Let's title it as nonviolence.

Participant: *A matter of need. It's like Galtung's orange story. They both want the orange. Actually, the question is not the orange. This model shows that there can be solutions meeting both demands when the root need is directly determined. Now when we think of the issue on a community basis, socialization of people can be very variable. Sometimes it happens in family, school, neighborhoods, but most people's political socialization process isn't individual. It usually happens on a group basis. How can we lead nonviolent communication in a group? It may be necessary to think hard for this aspect of the process. Can it be group based? The need here, if we make it more concrete and adapt to the Kurdish issue, what are the needs of the Kurds?*

Participant: *I have been a lawyer for seven or eight years, I am involved in many political cases. There is a big gap or vacancy when we begin to discuss the line of nonviolent political struggle. I think this issue should especially be discussed.*

I agree there is very little ready knowledge about how peace will come. Before us lies the task of being creative in this field. It caught my attention, you talked about the data: "If armed conflicts are not resolved within five years and the state does not resolve within seven years, it will not result." You say it will not be solved by war. Now why don't we look for creativity in such a predicament? Why do generations disappear? When young people are desperate, they take up arms. Other ways have to be suggested. I am not coming here with a ready-made solution in my pocket, but I seriously invite you to this. We can put one's thinking cap on and create an alternative. In other words, in order to change the paradigm, we have to discover and create new ways to move from the culture of violence, war and power of ten thousand years to a culture of peace and cooperation. There is no other way. Otherwise, as Gandhi said: "An eye for an eye will blind the whole world."

Since I had no job, I did not examine it in depth, but in Ireland, the IRA fought an armed struggle for thirty years and made peace with the UK. South Africa has passed from the apartheid regime to a democratic system without shedding blood. We need to examine these examples. My brother lived in South Africa. I went for the first time in 1994, when Mandela was released from pris-

on. Apart means separate. There was an incredible divergence between the black and white populations. There were no whites walking on the street, they drive around in their cars. Only blacks walk on the roads without pavements. I take off my hat before the cohesion that took place in the past twenty years. How did this country do this? How did these people act together in a country with incredible difficulties, intense crime and violence? Fifteen percent of the population is white, eighty-five percent is black, Indian, and hybrids. Nearly forty million of the black population have been kept in prisons and camps separate from whites for decades. I thought the moment apartheid was over, the blacks would cut off the whites. There was no war, but there was oppression, separation and torture. Read about Mandela's life. It is important that he said on the day he was released: "I spent 27 years in prison. If I don't change my mind, I'll take the prison with me." Such much blood was shed. Desmond Tutu's role and the truth and reconciliation commissions were established to open up a space for people to produce solutions by talking. The prisons in our minds prevent us from thinking new and peaceful ways.

Participant: *I think there is a more urgent problem, a situation that we neglected a lot, something valid for people who are in or on the edge of war. When we use violence mutually - it may be a language of violence brought on by legal struggle, there may be heavy emotions in which our angry, high-energy atoms act very seriously, or the same feelings based on just watching - what are we going to do with the violence that this situation creates among us?*

Thank you. I wanted to come to that point anyway. The big solution, I said at the beginning, comes in small steps. Really start planting seeds. First of all, it is necessary to notice the violence in existing structures. For example, when I see an association, a community, an organization, it can be an NGO, it can be the management of that NGO, I ask how they conduct their activities when they come together, how do they make decisions? Employing power over others, constructing submission emerges there also. I have worked in NGOs and social services in Germany for thirty years. Everyone was eager to volunteer. It worked with very little money and enthusiasm. There was a spirit of serving, contributing. Power, ego fights and dismissals were too much in every NGO I entered. Maybe they were not firing directly, but people were so intimidated by what we call mobbing today that they would eventually walk away.

At the general assembly of the last association I worked for, because of anger I had to go to the hospital early for giving birth, I gave birth two weeks early. It was a women's training center and I said that patriarchy has gone and matriarchy has come. We work with women to women, all the methods

used were old-fashioned like a lobbying job; bringing women to the association at the last minute and making them members, etc. “The same things are repeating,” I said. The system of violent power struggles that have been learned for centuries lives within us. Thank you very much for your question. These are the places where we will start awareness studies in order to learn to cooperate on the path of peace, power, authority, privileges, etc.

I chose and voluntarily entered a community that contributed to people in the field of education. In time, I realized that our minds, perspective and focus had to change. When our focus changes, we will see that our world also changes. Because keeping the focus of attention in right/wrong, rightful/unfair fights is like wearing red glasses. If we look at the world with these glasses; who is just, who is unjust, who is right and who is wrong, our world will turn into a red battlefield. If we learn to shift the focus of our attention from judgmental thoughts to needs, it has the effect of changing glasses. Then we are concerned with who needs what and how we can produce solutions that will take care of everyone’s needs. When we look at it like this, our perception also changes. I witness this in my own life. For this purpose, I told my story, my transformation journey. There was a question, what was it?

Participant: *“Revolutionary violence” in the Marxist literature.*

Thank you. In the past I was also confused about the necessity of revolutionary violence. Trying to solve violence with violence makes us part of the problem.

Participant: *As a community, we have started something together right now. I'm asking this question, in order to keep it on our agenda. We listened to examples from around the world. We heard sentences about participation in different peace processes. Something was mentioned about the participation of women; LGBTI+s were also mentioned. I want to bring the subject to children. What I will say may be very outrageous, since children are not still accepted as individuals; but, one of the most affected groups from the war are children, even the most affected. What is the place of children in this peace process? When talking about different groups and NGOs participating in the peace process, can we construct something based on the participation of children? How do they define peace and violence and are there examples in the world? There was an example of Montessori through child participation, maybe it can contribute to this in later sessions. I just remember and mention it so that it takes place on our agenda. While thinking about peace, while interpreting things, moving forward by including the child among the subjects... I wonder what they say, as the subjects affected the most.*

I will tell you my wishful thinking: To work in long-term, rooted nonviolent communication with active NGOs and with people who are truly grassroots and directly work with citizens and of course children, it is necessary to create resources for this. Are there such possibilities? It is necessary to devote some time to this work. If you join, we can talk about where we were, where we are, in our perspective, in our hope for peace, after a long and profound education, for example, a year later. Because when you talk like this at the beginning, it doesn't make sense. There is such a dream for a lasting peace that lies in my heart.

CHAPTER THREE

ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF RIGHTS INITIATIVE

Reha Ruhaviođlu

The Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER) is a human rights organization founded in 1991 by 54 Muslim intellectuals. Before the establishment of MAZLUMDER, there was a Human Rights Association (İHD) experience. In other words, as far as I understand, because the torture, violations, and victimization that occurred after the coup targeted the left community and made people victimized from the left, İHD emerged on such a need. MAZLUMDER has become an organization established to make visible and work to eliminate violations of religious and belief rights such as the headscarf issue. But, as Cuma Çiçek said, it was at a very early time - I think it was 1992 - MAZLUMDER, with the Kurdish Forum, slowly began to move from two tracks. MAZLUMDER was interested in the freedom of religion and belief of Muslims and the Kurdish Issue.

MAZLUMDER is one of the first institutions in the Muslim community dealing with civil society in a serious way. There were institutions that had a more community view and demanded some more serious political rights. However, MAZLUMDER is probably one of the first as a human rights organization.

Our internal discussions started to flare up as the Resolution Process in 2015 broke down and turned into conflict again. Some of the principles we had previously agreed upon were reopened for discussion. Differences emerged in the approach of the two groups regarding human rights. Finally, an extraordinary general meeting was held with the trustees appointed by the court. Since the legal process has not been completed, it was decided to close all 16 branches that did not approve of the extraordinary general assembly and did not attend the board. MAZLUMDER has closed 16 of the 24 branches.

I can say very roughly that there were two different perspectives in our approach to human rights issues and more importantly to the Kurdish issue. I think someone has been purged. I am saying this as a party, of course, not as an independent observer. I am expressing my subjective interpretation as one of the two sides. Probably other friends are thinking differently. Now we have

come to the Rights Initiative. The Rights Initiative was established in 2017, one month after MAZLUMDER's decision, and came up with the idea: "Instead of consuming our energy through internal fights, we leave the institution and start a new human rights movement."

The hallmark of both MAZLUMDER and the Rights Initiative among human rights organizations is their strong Islamic references. It is also conducting a human rights struggle with Islamic references. When we left, MAZLUMDER wanted to show this mainly as an identity. We were also holding discussions such as, "Our motivation and past may be Islamic, but the institution should not be an Islamic organization." It seems to me that the Rights Initiative was a little inspired by these discussions. "We are Muslims, but we are no longer engaged in Islamic politics," said Gannushi. "We are doing the democratic politics of Muslims." I think he stands close to where he says. I am not sure how much the Rights Initiative has discussed this and it came here, I say it as someone who is involved in those arguments. But eventually, we have become a human rights organization where Muslims are the majority and religious people come together and set up. Based on some previous experiences of MAZLUMDER, Rights Initiative, in case of difficulties in the future (for example, two different views emerge on the Kurdish issue or on another issue and these views blame each other by saying "You changed!"), this time we decided to prepare a statement of attitude on ominous matters and accepted and approved some of them. Three quarters of members have to approve these statements. For example, in case of a problem regarding the Kurdish issue, in Rights Initiative, the statement is in a consistency that can act as a referee among us. Today, they have active representation offices in four or five locations: We have our headquarters in Ankara, one representation in Istanbul, İzmir and Diyarbakır each. Organizations continue for other places.

What have we done so far, what are we doing and how are we doing? We can group what we have done under a few headings. One of them is under the title of action or activity. We can even include press conferences, marches, demonstrations, litigation, follow-ups, panels, conferences, collecting signatures and even twitter activity.

We have done reporting activities and we still do. For example, you remember the Bilge village massacre in 2009-2010. You already remember the Roboski massacre. Recently, we have written reports on violation of the rights to strike in a state of emergency. We prepared a report about the police operations against the Alpaslan Kuytul and Furkan Foundation community. After the end of the Resolution Process and the beginning of the conflicts, we prepared re-

ports about the violations of rights caused by the conflict wherever we could catch up. I think our most known report on this subject is the Cizre report, because it was the most prominent. We also have an Amed Sports report that we are trying to prepare if we can manage these days.

We are lobbying and mediating. We do lobbying in several ways; we do it here on a micro scale, between parties and institutions in Diyarbakır. In other words, we took part as mediators in almost all reactive situations faced by the Free Cause Party (Hüda-Par) and HDP community, sometimes alone, sometimes with a few institutions. We also go back and forth between AK Party and HDP. We also lobby between HDP and the government.

In addition, we gave more weight to our human rights trainings, especially after the conflict and the coup attempt, because of the fact that civil society was not visible on the street and everyone was drawn into their apartments. We used to attend Diyarbakır Human Rights School when we were at MAZLUMDER. However, within the body of Rights Initiative, we institutionalized this a little more and completed two periods. As far as I can see, the last two of these eight schools have become more professional, a little more consistent. We work in such a framework.

The title that Cuma Çiçek requested was “public communication and advocacy.” There was a report prepared by Cuma Çiçek for the Peace Foundation such as the status and role of non-governmental organizations in the solution processes. I took the definition from there as it is and moved through it. In that report, Cuma Çiçek says: “Advocacy and public communication work include activities such as NGOs presenting and disseminating information about the conflict, taking into account the public interest and the interests of citizens.” He gave a few examples there. One is, for example, campaign to raise public awareness about child deaths caused by the conflict. One is mass mobilization for the possibility of a resumption of peace talks, and the other is lobbying among political actors.

Surely, both civil society and we, as Rights Initiative, are always on the alert for something while doing all these works. For what reasons do we do these studies? We have to do it for the public interest. We can give a very concrete example today. It’s about families who protest in front of HDP. If you do not take care of the public interest in relation to the conflict, if you do not take it to the center, from the point of view of HDP, you can say that the state exploited these families and from the state’s point of view, HDP took the children of these families to the mountains. You are likely to get into the subject from

some point that is not your business, and miss the heart of the issue. That's why we care about being involved in the issue through the public interest.

I will share a few examples we have practiced so far and talked about some of them in more detail. Such as what and how we could do or how we couldn't do it and why we couldn't. One of them is the freedom of headscarf actions that took place before 2010 and even before 2007. After the 1990s, protests of freedom of belief have been made every Saturday since February 28. In Ankara, Istanbul, Sakarya, various cities, for example, a huge Freedom of Faith Meeting was held in Ankara, led by MAZLUMDER, everyone attended with white scarves. After all, you also see that the headscarf issue seems to have been largely resolved in society.

MAZLUMDER had organized the "Abolish The Oath Campaign" in 2008 or 2009. It first started in Diyarbakır. You know that Diyarbakır has such a feature; Diyarbakır is actually a center of all human rights institutions. This campaign started with posters hanging on the billboards. "There was an alternative oath that made fun of the Oath a little: "I am Kurd, Circassian, Laz, I am also hardworking, right!" In fact, a text to grab people's attention was hung, which wasn't recommended as an alternative. The police tore down the posters that had to be suspended for a week. After that, the "Oath" was abolished by government decision. This campaign seems to have been successful because we acted a little early, we got some social support and it was worth the trouble. I think this is the only campaign we celebrated.

MAZLUMDER has reports of ethnic and religious discrimination, these are good reports. Let me remind you that, it was an important issue that an institution carrying out a struggle for human rights with an Islamic reference underlined violations suffered by different faiths in Turkey or ethnic discrimination.

We had mother language campaigns; while at MAZLUMDER, we limited this to education in mother language. We also supported the abolition of the Law on Unity of Education, which would support this native language Education Campaign. So both of these contexts were about education in mother language. After we were closed, MAZLUMDER also ended all campaigns at the same period. Later, it only revived the February 28 Justice Campaign for the Victims. Apart from that, as far as I know, all campaigns stopped.

Today, as Rights Initiative, we are running a Mother language Campaign. This time we expanded the framework a little more. We do not limit it to education in mother language. We convoke the state to provide all public services in

mother language. This time - maybe because we started from Diyarbakır - we tell the Kurds. We also invite other language groups whose mother language is not Turkish and tell them that they should claim their own language. Maybe it's something a human rights organization could say outrageously, but we realized that such a framework could be more interesting.

We also had a campaign named Remove the Guardianship. That campaign is actually a good example of benefiting from each other, among the institutions. For example, DİSA had done academic studies about the village guard status. We also conducted a campaign using those academic studies. I think we had a panel; the professor who wrote the report of DİSA had arrived. It was not a very successful campaign.

Roboski was an issue that Rights Initiative kept on the agenda after MAZLUMDER. We opened stands in several cities. In Istanbul, we gave a Roboski Iftar in the garden of Fatih Mosque during Ramadan and there were people from the Wednesday Congregation attacked the Iftar with chopping knives. We're talking about a Muslim community also.

Perhaps one of our most decent works to date has been the persistent demand and pursuit of the return of child fighters. I will also detail that.

We also had an initiative that was closely related to our topic: The Contact and Dialogue Group Initiative. It was an initiative that started in Diyarbakır, trying to create the infrastructure of the Solution Process. When the conflicts started in 2015, we established a group called "Conflict Monitoring and Resolution Group" within MAZLUMDER. These reports were not bad ones; they were good reports as we were not a very professional institution.

Today, we have some initiatives related to the families who held the sit-in in front of HDP. Maybe I'll talk about them too.

I would like to mention some successful examples and how they succeeded. You may not always be successful just because you have a very good campaign and you have a very good communication with the public. Such as the violation of rights of belief by the headscarf victimization, which affects almost half of the society. Violation is widespread and social support is strong. The conjuncture also suits it. Let's say that international human rights institutions and norms now constantly repeat that this is a problem and a violation of rights, and the public becomes aware that it is something that is going on. In this case, you will have the chance to get social support. Thus, your request can be implemented.

The second is like the “Our Oath” case. We were running a campaign about “Our Oath.” At the beginning and at the end of each academic season, we were making protests and reading press releases in front of the National Education. But, if we say, “Only MAZLUMDER’s campaign succeeded the removal of Our Oath,” we would be unfair. It is never something that can only happen with our strength. It was important that the public power and the ruling power were uncomfortable with this text due to the traditional codes they previously carried. Second, it was also a little bit related to the Kurdish issue through the Solution Process. The state refrains from taking big steps on some issues related to the Kurdish issue and procrastinates. What can I give as small fish instead of big fish, “Our oath” is a good subject, it says. Pieces like this came together, we woke up one morning and “Our Oath” was no longer in our lives with the arrival of democratization package.

It is interesting that it didn’t come out completely, because the amended regulation was about teaching “Our Oath” in schools. I think it was the previous year, maybe last year, we realized that the text “Our Oath” is present in the second and third grade books. We asked this to the relevant institution within the scope of the Information Act. The relevant institution told us that the article “Our Oath is read every morning” has been removed, but the article said that it existed in the books. This is an achievement for us, but it is something that shows how much the bureaucracy persevered in eliminating even such a violation. I looked at the fourth grade books this year; it was not there. I don’t remember the others.

As for the issue of child warriors - remember, it was a little busy period, 2014-2015 - we followed this up until 2017. There were actions of the families of the children who joined PKK. A protest had started first on Fiskaya. It was like the protests done in front of HDP. A single family wanted to open a tent and their children named Sinan to be brought home. No one could say anything about the legitimacy of the action. The government did not crowd like today; NGOs close to the government did not exploit the situation this much. Maybe they did later, but... Eventually we went to visit the family. It was obviously an HDP family. It was a patriotic family. It was a peasant patriotic family, not an urbanite. They were saying a very simple thing: “Since Selahattin Demirtaş is doing politics, my child should do politics and not be in the mountains. I want him to be like Selahattin Demirtaş.” Let me give an example: “I don’t want him to be like Duran Kalkan.” It expressed its meaning well.

Two months before that protest, an international organization visited us. An organization called the Geneva Call. They expressed that they were interested

in this issue; we consulted what we were doing. We told them that in case of any other action we could communicate. When something similar happened, we said we had to get a reaction. The boy who went was fifteen I guess. So how could we get him? The Geneva Call came to our mind. We met them. We said, "There is such an issue, there was a covenant that you mentioned, send it to us." Namely, the institution signed a letter of covenant with PKK; PKK has committed not to use child fighters. The institution stipulates that children under the age of 18 should never be accepted as warriors. But the general state tradition of PKK and Turkey is to fall commentary on all contracts. PKK also commented there and said: "I open a category between the ages of 16-18, I will never accept the following from the age of 16, but if those aged 16-18 come, I will accept them, but I will not put them in armed camps, I will put them in training camps." So I do not give weapons, but I accept.

We made calls to PKK, based on this letter of the covenant. We said, "You have signed such a commitment, we know that such person came to you, send him back." Sometimes we also made mistakes. Here we have said the name Sinan; this is something wrong, something that should not be done. The name of the child was frequently mentioned also in the media and the family gave everyone a copy of the child's identity card. In other words, we could not pay attention to the child's name, body and privacy; society, media, the family, we all have sometimes written such names openly. Eventually, the child came back, and when the child came, the other families were both surprised and hopeful of course: "Oh, he can come."

At that time, we also made one or two calls. We also gave the information to the Geneva Call, since there was covenant implying that you can intervene. Later, many families who heard about this, started to apply to our institution. "My child went to the mountains, he went like this or like that." They also held a demonstration in front of the municipality, a sit-in. We followed this matter as friends. We met regularly with every family at least once a month. We noted the news they received about their children, because all the families were looking for their children in the countryside. The boy went to Birqileyn for a picnic and didn't come back. After that, the family goes to Lice. Finding someone in Lice; for example, the person in Lice says to the family: "Your child went to Dersim." The family goes to Dersim and finds someone; he tells something also. There were even families going to the camps in the south or below Kandil and seeing their children and talking to them. Some of the children call, and tell them that they are in Rojava or elsewhere. The family has more or less information about their child. We were getting all this information from the family. We followed the process in this way. We never chose

to contact PKK directly because it would be a headache for us. We chose to run the whole issue through the Geneva Call and institutions like it.

Also, we always made calls in the public sphere. “We have 20,30,50 children who we have applied for. We made statements such as: “The children whose initials are this and that, joined last week, they went from that way.” This showed that we knew the issue and that we had data. The Geneva Call says that these children are in the camps, possibly by phone calls, by writing letters or by going there and talking to PKK. We have seen how important it is to follow an issue in great detail by showing its data. Now, when we gathered such detailed information and tell the international organizations, PKK could not easily refuse. Most of these children have been sent back.

At that time, YPG also signed this covenant, and as far as I remember, we had 55-56 applications that we were following up. The applications were something like this: “My 15-year-old child has recently been hanging out with PKK youth ideologically and left. I do not know where he is. How he went, I don’t know.” Of course, we were taking these notes, but we were not continuing our initiatives on this information. If we had done so it is very likely to hear what is said today: “Brother, he left the house, he has gone, I don’t know where he went, will I now scan ten thousand militants and find your child?” Later, YPG also signed this covenant and many children returned. Of the 55-56 children we tracked, 15 came back.

But we know that the number that went there was over a thousand, we can say thousands. If we were to look at those under the age of 18, three thousand were mentioned. Even if this was an exaggeration, we could easily see that at least half of the number might have gone. For example, a family from Silvan told us: “25 children returned to the neighborhood this week. They went to Rojava and returned. A requirement of the covenant; YPG sent them back. Coming from Kandil was getting more difficult. PKK delivered them to the government of Iraqi Kurdistan Region and then they had to be delivered to Turkey.

I guess we were the right institution to intervene here. We had such a width. Neither PKK nor the government could find our initiative very strange. Nobody perceived it as something malicious anyway.

Using international mechanisms and partners has been very important in retrieval. Our regular and databased follow-up was very effective in the success of this business. We always looked for this balance: This task has risk and legitimacy. We have always preferred to balance the risk of this job with its legitimacy.

For example, it was about the last week of May 2015, several families came and said their children were going to the mountain. They told the ways they went and other things. They told us that they wanted us to do something about their children. We consulted the family: "Would you like us to make a press release with you? Would you like us to do it without you?" Of course, we would not give the name of the child. The family said: "We will not, but you must make the press release. If the kid is somewhere on the road, maybe he'll come back. We want you to do that." Here, an interesting account of human rights advocacy comes into play; this is the same in journalism. Remember, we're going to the election on June 7. The government says: "We will bring back the children who went to the mountain, the mothers will not cry. The children who went to the mountain will be reunited with their families," they say. This is in the election statement. Now your effort to get back the boy who went to the mountain also means that you acted upon the government's election statement. There is such a risk. There is also the risk that HDP may pass the election threshold. Everyone is very excited, very anxious. Remember all that time. "What if we do this?" we discussed. This may affect HDP votes. We, as a human rights organization, may have caused such a thing. Then we said, friends, our job is to focus on social interest. We have to make this statement because our job is to deal with violations. We cannot afford to delay dealing with the violation. If this will affect the HDP in a bad way, the institution that should consider this is not MAZLUMDER and Rights Initiative, but PKK. They should not accept any children going there. If they think that this has turned into a campaign and that HDP votes are negatively affected by it, then they will put an end to the situation. We cannot postpone anything by saying, "Unity and solidarity are most needed these days, in difficult times."

That's why I exemplified journalism. For example, a huge corruption case has emerged, and at the same time the mayor candidate is related to it. If I explain this, the mayoralty is in danger, but there is also corruption. In fact, such a person should not be a mayor. The journalist should write this. We acted like this and put ourselves at risk. We were always making written statements before, at that period we talked in front of the press and got strange reactions from HDP audience. We could not check our social media accounts in those days. I mean, there were thousands of insults but we said that we were glad to do such a thing. We did not regret it afterwards.

Why did we stop the follow-ups? The clashes became very intense. Neither the families could have any news from their children, nor were we able to follow them. We always told the same thing to Geneva Call: "There is no im-

provement, the family does not know anything new, no initiative from the family side.” So Geneva Call noticed that the data coming from Turkey was not updated and consequently we have lost our attention about the subject. City wars had already begun. Children have mostly clashed in the centers. They either lost their lives or were arrested.

The Contact and Dialogue Group was established in 2012. İHD and we were there; there was also Tahir Elçi. Five-six institutions had formed a group called Contact and Dialogue. Remember, there were hunger strikes in prisons in 2012. Everyone was very nervous again. On the other hand, PKK had switched to a different method of struggle. It had turned into something other than just hit and run guerrilla tactics. In some places the way of struggle and conditions dictated something. We had some contacts with this group, starting from the lowest level. Let me give you an example, you meet with HDP vice chairmen, then you meet with an influential AK Party deputy in the region. Then you take it to the next level, you talk to HDP leaders. Then you meet with some ministers. You are gradually inviting someone else to the institution. For example, I think Mithat Sancar was one of those who was later included in the group. In other words, some attempts were made to facilitate communication between HDP and the government and to make this issue debated inside.

That initiative also had a chance. The Solution Process started quickly. This initiative said that they were no longer needed. When we look back, actually it is still needed. They could have been a mechanism monitoring an independent solution. But these are the reflections of our inexperience both individually and socially. Ultimately, what did they do? They could not easily close the doors to you because the conditions imposed solution negotiations, because social expectation was getting more widespread. The government did not pursue such a harsh policy. They would say the Kurdish issue is also our issue and democratization promises were still given. The doors were not slammed as hard as they are today.

People who lobby should be respected in that field. For example, Şah İsmail Bedirhanoğlu, Tahir Elçi and Mithat Sancar had experience in mediation and lobbying between the government and HDP. Institutionally, we can count MAZLUMDER, also Selahattin Çoban and Ahmet Faruk Ünsal. Therefore, good actors and right actors have formed a group, they know what they are doing. Indeed, lobbying is very difficult in human rights struggle. We experience once again with the issue of families in front of HDP. You go and try to make a person, an institution take a very small step, but s/he lectures you, makes propaganda, insults the other party. You always have to look after this relationship.

These are a few successful examples, but let's talk about some unsuccessful ones. For example, the fact that they were not well planned from the beginning is the reason why some of our campaigns did not reach the level we wanted. One is the Mother Language Education Campaign. It was a campaign where you had to do something new all the time, and we began without thinking it over. An example is our failure to ensure sustainability. In the Remove Village Guardians Campaign, for example, we could not achieve this due to a lack of good public relations organization. We are going to make a campaign, but how do we ensure the participation of people in the bazaar market? We have not been able to analyze it well. It was a failure or lack of good division of labor.

By the way, I should remind that both MAZLUMDER and the Rights Initiative are working only with the support of volunteers and donations. A great campaign may come to your mind, you will also find out how this campaign can continue in a great way, but it takes so much money and so many people, you don't have those resources. So you have to start it off at a low level or two. For example, one may have to deal with two jobs at the same time. This causes the engine to become hot, overheating and a breakdown of the car. Lack of people, money and technical support is a reason for for this breakdown.

The change of conditions can also affect your campaign. For example, when we started the Village Guard Campaign, the reactions were not bad, everyone listened. The Village Guardians Federation did something about the Resolution Process. Then some village guards were killed. Just then the village guard started to get stronger. We could not meet with village guards' associations when the village guard turned into income revenue and more village guards were recruited due to other factors. We had planned to meet, we had a contract, but we could not make an appointment. As the Resolution Process got worse, so did this task.

This is not an example of failure but I want to share it, as it is a good experience. Sometimes you have prepared everything for work but someone acts and does it before you do. Let's say we will make a statement about the mother language tomorrow. We get up in the morning, the government says: "The right to education in mother language has been recognized, it will be implemented in 2023." Now that explanation remained in your hands. I would like to share a very instructive example in the human rights struggle for me. You will remember the "How Happy Is The One Who Says I am a Turk" in front of the Governorship. As MAZLUMDER, we planned an action like this. We prepared a canvas of the same size. We dictated the 22 verse of Sura Rum

in Kurdish on this canvas. "The difference of our colors and languages is one of God's signs," it writes. We would go in the morning prayer, our two friends would hang the canvas down. We did not inform the media. We just told two journalists we knew: "We have a protest, we will call you somewhere during the morning prayer." Because when you e-mail the media, it goes to security chief office before the media. We were preparing the canvas; everyone agreed on the topic, we carried it out with love and enthusiasm. We said we should meet in the evening of the last day, a last division of labor meeting. Two lawyers would do it, our branch chairman and our vice chairman would do it; we did not want to risk the others.

There was Şimşiröddin Ekinci, the former deputy chairman of MAZLUMDER. He had come to the meeting that day. The people that we call the second ring, not the board of directors, have transferred the work to the young people, those who have stepped back. "Guys, I'm going to suggest something to you, don't do it that way," he said. How can't we do it, we made a decision. He said: "Whose demand is this request?" Of the MAZLUMDER Diyarbakır Branch. You also know the state more or less. When we hang this banner tomorrow, consider the possibility that it will backfire. Because nationalists are also against the Solution Process, Wise People are always protested. If this takes place on the agenda of the country, it will take, and if a nationalist reflex rises the governorship can hang that sign more brilliantly, let alone meet this demand. Even if that canvas would go down, it won't. So I suggest you don't do it like that." What shall we do then? He said something wonderful. It is still the earring in my ear. "You must do this by transforming your institutional demand into the demand of the society. First, make an appointment with the governor - I think he had been newly appointed then - and go for good and tell this action as you also tell a few points about the city. Tell him that you want this plaque to be removed. For this, submit an official petition and wait 15 days, if there is no answer, let's open stands in a few places in Diyarbakır. We want the plaque on which it is written, "How Happy Is The One Who Says I am a Turk!" to be removed. Let's collect signatures on the street, let's take five hundred, a thousand, whatever, to the governor's office, land let's petition again. Let's say that the people of Diyarbakır want this plaque to be removed. We also want it to be removed on behalf of them. If the governorship still does not do it, then take this action. Then two thousand or three thousand people will know that you are in such a preparation, that you have such a request, and they will support you. Do what you said first the very last."

What happened meanwhile? Mahsuni Karaman submitted a petition to the governorship. Independent of us, we don't know each other. And a month or

two later, the governorship removed that letter. God bless him. The problem was already solved before we could format this campaign otherwise. Sometimes you fail, but this is another competition. So if someone is interested in something, it's something that takes your burden off, so it's something that pleases you. Therefore, there is no such thing as "We were entering a sector, we would have earned that much and we lost".

Based on these experiences I mentioned, we formatted our new mother language campaign well. We worked with the advertisers. An institution (Rawest) had done a research about language with young people. We had the opportunity to use this data in the campaign. An institution (The Truth Justice Memory Center) in Istanbul invited us to meet with some advertisers. Then we said let's do this campaign like this. Our designs have been beautiful. There is an infographic on the billboard in the corridor about the Kurdish youth's approach to language. Our social media posts were prepared professionally. Our service texts have been prepared in advance; which sharing will be made when, where will the bags be distributed, how will the posters be visible etc.

We had two shortcomings, as a first step we would hang on billboards. This was something that made the campaign bigger, but after we submitted our petition to the municipality, a trustee was appointed before we could get an answer. Civil society can use some billboards allocated to the municipality free of charge. So the municipality provided such an opportunity, which we're thankful for. Secondly, we were going to do street interviews and edit. Our test shot was great; however, it was a trial shoot. For real filming, it was necessary to obtain consent from people on the street. People were reluctant to give consent and there was no good material from those who gave consent, that video was off. We weren't able to do these two things.

But for example we did the following; being an institution like Rights Initiative also has the following advantage. You are good with A) Bookstore and B) Bookstore; someone is Islamic and someone is close to HDP. Even more in the middle, C) Publishing House can also support you. We were able to go and leave our bags to all of them, and we also determined the slogans of the campaign; it is not harsh. Two things are written on our bags. One side is Kurdish and the other side is Turkish. It writes, "My Language is My Being" / "Ziman Hebûn e". In one, it says, "Language is Right, Right is Life." It is something that everyone can wear, anyone can wear even the Turkish side. I took it to Kayseri and left eight or ten there. I said to my sister-in-laws, "If you don't wear the Kurdish side, your language is your right, you travel in Turkish". This time, the materials run out very quickly before we announced we were

starting. Yayın ağacı, Lilav, Yeni Umut Stationery, Ensar Bookstore - We left the bags there, putting our brochures in them and they gave it to the customers.

The cloth bag issue actually has another story. It was something about the bag agenda. The point of being associated with the issue of society is important here. You give it to a person for free in front of a market; instead of a 25cent plastic bag, you give it for free. These are things that are normally sold in markets for five or ten lira; Therefore it is very attractive, your slogan reaches people.

The choice of cloth bag is something that comes out of the discussion of the advertising agency employees. We have a few other works as well, if we find money, we will have them done too. For example, dishwashing sponges, you give every house one dish sponge. You dress your campaign on its packaging. We also assessed the feasibility; it's a very cheap thing. In the next step, maybe we can give directly to the mothers or the women in the house. I do not know if the bag will reach the house or not, but if you enter a building and leave one in front of each door, people will buy it. The more opportunity we have the stronger the campaigns are.

I want to end with talking about the families in front of HDP. Is this a crisis or an opportunity? For whom, for us! Is this a crisis or an opportunity for HDP or AKP? This is not our main concern. They should ask this question themselves. Of course, we know how difficult the issue is and how tricky it is. We also see that it is being exploited. But we also see that the issue has an aspect from our perspective that can be turned into an opportunity in terms of social interest, and that's why we decided to get involved.

The number of institutions that are capable of negotiation with both HDP and AK Party is maybe high in Diyarbakir but very few in Turkey overall. When we said that we would like to have a meeting on this issue, both parties agreed. We examined the problem a little. There are two groups of families: the soldiers who were captured by PKK, the police and those in PKK's mountain staff. It is divided into two: those who are children and those who are not. It's really hard to get into when you consider this as a single picture, but maybe we can do something by breaking it.

We told both HDP and AK Party that they have no right to say, "We are not the addressee of this issue." One of you gets 70% votes in this city; one of you gets around 30%. So this city has two political parties. Now if you cannot deal with the most important problem of these people, which problem can you deal

with? So don't underestimate yourself," we said. "You are a powerful political actor. You have to deal with the problems of these families. You can bring them or not, we don't know, but of course we want their needs to be met. "

Second, we made some suggestions. We saw it yesterday, for example, HDP has implemented some of them. "Set up something like a commission within the party, a crisis table, and invite families. Tell them that you want to hear their story in detail. Where did their child go, when did he go, how old was he?" Six or seven of these twenty-five families are soldiers, police families. Nineteen or twenty are families with children going to the mountain. A child of a family left 22 years ago. If you ask me, even PKK does not know whether that child is there, but while you are doing an inventory about him, it is very likely that you will find a 13-15 year-old, who went three or five months ago. You can get involved in the issue from that point.

We are now preparing for this. They told us that PKK made a statement. They ask the state to send a delegation, and told that they would provide the soldiers and cops. Our friends will find this explanation; we will make a call to the government based on this statement. As Rights Initiative, we are volunteers of such a job. If PKK has made such a call, if it will, let the state allow us, we will go and bring soldiers and police prisoners. The resolution of this issue will at least turn their eyes back to the Kurdish issue, the conflict, the need for a solution, and the people coming down from the mountains. This is our hope.

On the other hand, hereby, for example, we go to AK Party and say: "They went in front of HDP, but this is not an issue that can be solved only with HDP. Can this issue be resolved without you, without your support of some facilities, without some guarantees given by the government? It certainly cannot be resolved. So you have to do something."

We will carry these initiatives to Ankara, to those who have a group in the assembly. This issue cannot be solved in a palliative way; it's not about 1-2 children. Ten thousand people, how will they come? What should I do? Let's do something, what can we do? It may emerge in this search.

You can't handle the whole thing. If you take care of even a small part of it, it is a great opportunity for you. We get involved in this issue through this opportunity and we are thinking whether the issue of peace can be discussed or revived again within the institution, that is, within the political party. In other words, we take care of the interests of families on a micro scale. Also,

on a macro scale, we get involved in a work by considering the interests of the whole society regarding the Kurdish issue, conflict and solution.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *You talked about your experiences. You explained the violations of rights. You expressed how you tried to find a solution for this. Yes, you have been very influential in all these studies you have done, but I have a question. For example, you talked about children in general while thinking about rights violations. Have you ever seen the injustice regarding women? You must have seen it. The headscarf is an example of this, but in general, we live in a society with a more traditional and feudal structure, especially in this region. We can see the violations against women more clearly. It is unfortunately like this in our whole society, have you been able to do something about it? For example, you mentioned a campaign. You said, let's distribute the dish sponge used in the kitchen to the mothers and take it to the doors. Yeah, we got it too. So, these are actually our social issues. For example, we deliver that job to the mother, we hand it over to the woman. We expect you to be a little more sensitive. That dish sponge should be distributed to everyone, or it can only be given to men, for example, in institutions, after work. Typically, eighty percent of an establishment is male, more effective than going home.*

Participant: *You said 54 Muslim intellectual at the beginning of your presentation. I am really curious about the definition of "Muslim intellectual."*

I cannot describe you what Muslim intellectual is. Probably at that time there were people who seemed to be Muslims and intellectuals at the same time. If I tell you today some of them, you would laugh. At a time, these people were intellectual and Islamic in the society; Muslim intellectuals, as they are known. Otherwise, it is not my job to define the intellectual on its own, but the Muslim intellectual is not at all on its own. It's a little bit about society seeing them that way.

What you said about the woman issue is right. When I realized that slip of the tongue, I realized that it was actually the traditional codes in the subconscious and someone would slap me. Not bad, that's how we learn anyway. In the women's issue, we are talking about something that people in the Islamic community do. There, unfortunately, the issue of men and women is in a difficult point still. Talking about gender equality and putting into action are different things.

For example, there was a Women Studies Group within the body of MAZLUMDER. One of our crises in MAZLUMDER was this group; they wanted to be autonomous. The women and their supporters wanted this group to be an autonomous group. Almost all of the members who liquidated us then were saying the same thing: "No, they go and do their work, they bring it to the executive committee, the committee has a wide right of disposition." We said, "If it does not violate our general principles, if it is not going to be a work of MAZLUMDER from the outside, they do not have to consult us before taking every decision." By the way, I am telling you as a committee member of that period. So I guess this example shows how tough things happened inside.

For example, now I'm looking at the administration after liquidating us. Either there is one woman or none. Recently, an anxiety has started as follows: Friends, it's not just about showcasing or anything. Women have other suggestions for solutions, a more colorful discussion environment. Who can be added to this environment? How do you search for women friends in the central administration of a human rights organization? The way you search men. When such a woman comes, she has worked a little about the rights issue. Therefore, the position she starts at disturbs the other party. There is a common opinion; both traditions and Islam have been interpreted against women till today. These women also object to this. This is a problem. It was a part of our problems. Therefore, women friends were liquidated with us.

In my opinion, women's participation in the Rights Initiative is still weak. The number of women in the organization is also very low. This inevitably affects the studies. Of course, we cannot work just because there are no women. I'm not saying this as an excuse, but I admit that it is still weak. But there is a good attitude documented on the women's issue. At least there is an attitude document that is approved by the women and the framework they drew. Just in case there is a circulation in the Rights Initiative and if someone is one step and two steps behind the women's rights, it will be a guide at that point. It will be meaning "you are doing wrong, not the institution."

We need to increase women's participation in the association's decision-making and activism process. There is a problem with women in general, you know. Now, less people come and show interest in these jobs than before. Fewer people are involved in the studies. We are working on this; we have not ended it. That is why we hold the next meetings with people who have attended and continued at the School of Human Rights with either men or women. We are being a little more active within this institution because we operate with more human labor. So we are not professionals. We do not have

the luxury to employ three people who give all their labor to this institution and do all the work. That's why the more people we have, the more jobs we can handle. For example, we try to keep the number of men and women equal at the School of Human Rights. Now I have checked it, at the School of Human Rights, the number is like 22 to 24 out of 46. It was much worse before. I know what happened three or four years ago. Applications are getting more and more. We have the chance to accept a sufficient number of men and women in the application. There are other quotas or something. In that sense, "headscarf campaigns" and "women's studies group" can be counted as concrete, but yes, I can say that we are very weak.

Participant: *Increasing the number of women in your organizations is also a positive development for us. But what I really want to say is, can you see the gender inequality in society, as much as you can see other inequalities? Can you find solutions to these? You also said that you are doing lobbying, you are aware of that; we know that female mediation is more effective. So, did you have any work or project or could it be in the future in this context? Whether it is about violence against women or about the social and economic inequalities women are subjected to. What kind of projects you might have regarding these problems?*

Four of our nine executive committee members are women. Our Vice President, Fatma Bostan Ünsal, works on the women issue in conflict resolution. We invited Fatma Bostan Ünsal to Human Rights School to make a presentation about the women's movement in the world and Turkey and Muslim women's movement. It is important for us to convey the subject in our School of Human Rights. Even if we cannot directly increase the number of women and are not able to strengthen female participation, it is also important that something is at least conveyed to people and something to do outside.

Second, we specifically put the Colombian issue in the program of School of Conflict Resolution. Nisan has also spoken about Colombia. She sent a video because she could not come. She mentioned the report DEMOS made. DEMOS' report was "Colombian Conflict Resolution and Gender Perspective." Both women and LGBTI organizations were interviewed and such a report was prepared. In this sense, we have made choices such as the contribution of women to conflict resolution and sharing the benefits. We made interventions where we could.

Participant: *What you have told is valuable. The example of the mothers and the issue between AKP and HDP is also. By mediating between AKP and HDP,*

you can communicate with both parties. This is very important in peace building. Of course we are party to peace. Some of us can be a party to AKP and some of us to HDP. I definitely have a party too. I think that mediation is not only very valuable but also a very fine line. How can you balance this during the normal processes? Because it's a very difficult balance; probably on a very thin rope. Both sides can take credit; both sides can take action immediately, especially in critical processes. I wonder how you achieved this, because even when I write an article for a newspaper, I get nervous. Sometimes I also say to myself should I also engage in same tasks, a part of me wants it. How can you achieve this as a rights organization?

Participant: *Social peace processes are very long processes. We know from all examples that peace does not arrive after it is signed between the two parties. The cooperation among non-governmental organizations working in this field in relations to advocacy and public communication... We all know that even if our background, ideological view and organizational structure are different, it is very important to come together under the title of human rights. In this social peace process, how are the spaces that we cooperate with while forming this language of defense? Are there any examples of this process? I would like to hear that too. Because I think many organizations are working in this field in Diyarbakır, but I see that these common working areas have been separated for the last three years. In fact, we all want to do something and while there is a possibility of raising this struggle field, expansion of the specific layers, these separations prevent developments. I am curious about this. How can we create common spaces?*

Participant: *You said that you had relations with these mothers who are crying and convoking and the political parties. I'm just curious about one thing at this point. What is your opinion here? Are mothers really shrieking or is there anyone after political rent through them? I want to learn your opinion, your observation.*

Participant: *The media issue has a critical importance in the public communication issue. Especially in terms of spreading the news among people and reaching large groups. What is Rights Initiative's relationship with the media, maybe you can also add social media? What are your experiences with advocacy and media? What are the problems and solutions you found in this matter?*

Participant: *You mentioned two sides in conflict resolution; in fact, the ideological, political attitudes that underlie the conflict of the two sides. You said that*

you are not part of these attitudes, and you are not as far as I know. The parties have conflicting ideological and political manners. Again, you have your own worldview. How can you reconcile the parties with your worldview? By just saying peace... So come on, let there be peace, but without going to the basics... I am trying to explain this, without getting to the root of the matter, swamp - I define it as "swamp", excuse me - how can there be short-term solutions without getting to the center of the problem? For example, you can stop the conflict between Hûda-Par and PKK or between Hûda-Par and HDP youth, but how will you reach a permanent solution? How will you find solutions to differences in their ideological and political or to their related approaches?

Something has been misunderstood when I said, "I'm going easy." We never see ourselves as an important organization or describe ourselves as subjects. It seems that this process has started in Diyarbakır in 2004, among these twenty-eight provinces, more or less. Since then, we have a position. We don't want to lose that position. I mean by the position, look, when we were liquidated from MAZLUMDER, they have wanted to liquidate us also from the Islamic community. Because this is the way it is. If you have a critical approach in your own community - this is not only among Muslims, but also in the left community, sometimes even harsher- especially if you have a criticism that can listen to what the other party says and speak to them, people immediately want to push you to the other party. Because a neighborhood, a community, an ideological structure wants to remain homogeneous. Heterogeneity kills that thing.

One side insistently wanted to push us to the other side, but the other side wants to attract us with great enthusiasm. Like, "You have no job there, come here." We are between those two sides, in a shaky situation and must stay there. Especially today, the rift in the middle of that polarization in society is much wider. Compared to 2013 and 2011, there are much less people, institutions and parties that can stand in between. Consequently, we take care to stay there. We also have such vigilance. I'd like to share that too, but we've never considered ourselves like someone important. By accident, we gained a position, and if you have such a position, it comes to mind. This gives you in an important position or not. But it doesn't. Among the people who brought eight public officials in the hands of PKK in 2013 were two of us: our chairman and our vice president. After two or three weeks, we wanted to leave a black wreath in front of AK Party Provincial Presidency with our deputy chairman of that period. This vice president was also within the Contact and Dialogue Group during the Solution Process. That parliamentary commission report on

Roboski came out with the approval of AK Party members, and we wanted to leave a black wreath in front of AK Party in Diyarbakır. “We are not allowing you because you are endangering the Solution Process that has begun,” the police said to our vice president. Do you see the absurdity? “Oh, this guy has already brought them, he’s already worked for the Solution Process,” he doesn’t say this. As a matter of fact, we couldn’t leave that wreath.

Let me try to sort it out. The issue of the mothers in front of HDP is somewhat similar to the beginning in 2014. Of course, I don’t know how Hacire Akar came, but after all she says that her child is gone. There is a child who has gone. Therefore, there is a justified cry. Then came some families who witnessed this. HDP has some claims, there are other claims that we have heard also from elsewhere but we have not verified yet. According to these allegations, there are such families in particular and they are sent to HDP. HDP claims that some promises are made, and those who do not accept them have troubles in other ways. The cry is a right cry, even if someone sent them there or they came on their own. The children of the families we interviewed are on the mountain. I know one of them. I think there is a father from Ağrı, Eleşkirt. I know his kid has gone to the mountain. HDP has even told us, “We know some of the families who live there; they have visited us before about such issues. Their children are on the mountains,” he said. On the day we visited HDP, one of the families threw a tea glass at a HDP member. The glass was broken and the person was wounded. “We know that his kids are on the mountains,” he said, for example, “But he was provoked and abused.”

Someone is using this problem in another way. Let me give you a very interesting example from 2014. In Diyarbakır, I was at a meeting with families whose children at a young age were on the mountain. A group of families were also in Ankara. One of our former executives, one of those who later organized an operation to us was tweeting like this: “Why isn’t MAZLUMDER doing anything with these families?” I was at the meeting with those families. If you run the business diplomatically with the lobby, you need to be more sensitive. Today, institution X can shout in front of HDP and say whatever it wants, it has such a luxury. I can’t afford to say whatever I want; I have to be very careful. Because when PKK is uncomfortable with my attitude, they may not send the child. In 2014, the arrival of children from Kandil was severely interrupted. First, this issue was used in a meeting. Second, PKK said to Geneva Call about a child who came back: “We send the children, but they will never appear on media!” They were sent back with this annotation, but that boy is in front of the municipality (He was a 12-13 year old boy). After all, you

cannot make a 12-13 year old child speak like that. The televisions are handing the microphone to the kid who came from the mountain and asking what he has done. The boy got very bad. He probably survived that trauma very hard. Then PKK said that people were making this a political show material, and stopped sending the children. Now, at least, we know that if those who do this are really bothering about the arrival of the children, they should not be doing such a comfortable show. But you cannot tell anyone, "Brother, you are making a show, we are sincere."

Our relations with the media are not bad. We have good relations with journalists in Diyarbakır maybe not with all of them but we have good relations with Sputnik, BBC, and Voice of America. There was a section of a book about this at the association, such as the relationship between civil society and media, and we talked about the possible tactics. It was not bad. We improved our social media posts. Twitter posts have a dimension; you can see the whole picture without clicking the picture. You won't click on the tweet, but I want you to see the full message when it passes in front of you. There are programs that can design according to such dimensions. We make designs with these programs. The tweet becomes more visible like this. We use social media actively and we will use it more actively in the coming period. We have also started to use Instagram.

At least our names are the same on all media platforms. You know, this is a very serious problem. For Diyarbakır at least, it is like that. We are aware that communication with the media and communication policy in general is a need and there will be more in the upcoming period. Thanks to the journalists, they are interested in our campaigns. We are also doing things the way they may take their interest. You have to go and stop where s/he looks. Very classic, five-page statements are still made on common platforms, but there is no news. Half a page but a few effective sentences are required. In this way people will be able to tweet like "Rights Initiative said the following!"

These may sound pragmatic to you. The whole point, I think, is to bring people who approach the issue pragmatically closer to our principled approach. This is also the case in conflict resolution. You may want to have peace, but when you discuss this with the relevant actors, you can be pragmatic and sometimes remind them what they will gain from the steps to be taken. Otherwise, you may not even care. A right for me is a right and should be recognized regardless of its consequence. If AK Party thinks about the right to education in mother language, "If I recognize this, will I be a great, powerful state in

the Middle East or not?” When learned together, Kurdish and Turkish will be sister/brother languages; they will not be separated. You will be a grand, democratic country,” I can tell. This is to match our own principled demand with its pragmatic demand.

I think the balance in mediation between the two ideological sides has also something to do with that. It is very difficult of course. Most difficult of all is that our corporate representations are not visible. Our personal representations do not appear either. At the same time, you represent different institutionalisms. For example, consider that you are both the vice president of the bar association and the vice president of İHD. What will happen? Sometimes corporate identities will get mixed up. In civil society, nobody - including me - may act with total altruism and sacrifice. Everyone may have other types of plans or programs. It is comprehensible to a certain extent, until he abuses the institution.

It's a difficult thing to be between two ideological sides. First of all we are not interested in their ideology. Second, one is in a libertarian woman, environmentalist paradigm, the other is conservative, nationalist. It doesn't work like this. It may happen only in very micro scales. We held mixed meetings here with the Peace Foundation, with The Truth Justice Memory Center, sometimes with Islamic NGOs close to the government, sometimes with NGOs close to HDP. We talked about the issue in very small contexts there. I always say this. There is an agenda in Diyarbakır like the pollution of Tigris along Hevsel and I cannot bring İHD and Memur-Sen (The Confederation of Syndicate of Public Servants) together in the solution of the Kurdish issue, can I bring them together for the solution of cleansing Hevsel? At least they may have greeted each other there. There may be communication between them. Blockages can be softened. These ideological two sides can never be united; they can never make peace completely. Our point is how close can we gather them to solve something that these two sides will be involved in?

When we visit HDP, they complain about AK Party for an hour. “You are our friends too, you think like us, right?” they ask. The similar is also said in AK Party: “We know these children, HDP sends them one by one. Don't they?” Your mimics are very important at that moment. You have to stand like a stone. You cannot affirm, you cannot object. If you do, you're doing something wrong for the other side. If you object, they say, “Get up, go.” to you. It is a difficult thing, but as you do it, you learn it. We are not doing it because we are professionals. We goofed a lot, it also happens.

Our NGOs remember solidarity when they get into trouble; I am saying this for Diyarbakır. I say this by including them all, us as well. Probably most of our friends are from Diyarbakır and they know this. We see how it happens in good times, but in difficult times... Unfortunately, this is the case with Kurdish politics. In difficult times, everyone talks about national unity. In good times, the meeting is canceled because of simple reasons like “who will sit on the chair?”

It is important to come together with the commons. We brought this to a point by talking to Raci Bey first, then with Abdullah Bey, the president of İHD, with the president of the bar association, at least as a few institutions. I have an example in my mind. We went to Cizre reporting as MAZLUMDER alone, we were 22 people. I do not remember how many institutions have united there; İHD, TİHV, Eğitim-Sen, Gündem Çocuk. At least 25 people went, too. Your house is destroyed; I visit you as MAZLUMDER, see you and leave. İHD delegation comes after talks, leaves after me. For Faysal Sariyıldız, the mayor, the same. AK Party district chairman, I don't know if they have gone for a visit, but it's all the same. What a waste of effort, isn't it? Why are we doing this? Because we couldn't agree on some reports before. For example, we could not agree on the 6-8 October Report. (The friends who liquidated us made the absence of report a reason for the liquidation, but we could not publish that report because of the same person who made that accusation.)

Then we said that this cooperation should be like this: Let it be a platform, not a binding relationship, but a flexible communication network; for example, the Cizre reporting. We, İHD, bar association and TİHV, should give four people, how many institutions are there? Let's say we went there with sixteen people, four from each institution. Let's split in four. Each person does one conversation. In each group, there should be one person from each institution; then let's return and store all this data in a pool. Let four people write a draft report. I gave an example for four people; it could be ten. If we see that we cannot agree in the first draft, let's distribute the pool in four equal copies and everyone writes their own report. At least we would have done it with 16 people, not with 45-50 people from the field.

How beautiful it sounds when you talk and tell? Sometimes it is interrupted because of us and sometimes other reasons. It is very important to find the minimum commons and gather around it. If I am doing something with DİSA, if I have an intention to do it, if I am sitting at the same table, I should know what kind of institution DİSA is or you know what kind of institution

IHD or Rights Initiative is. If you put something that the Rights Initiative will not agree, right or unjust, right or wrong; that table will fall apart. This is not gathering around the basic commons. This means bringing your institutional baggage and imposing it on someone. We are not yet in this culture. Let me say, especially us, I don't want to judge any other.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL COHESION SENSITIVE TO CONFLICT: THE EKO-POLITIK EXPERIENCE

Tarık Çelenk

It's a great thing in itself that there's a group of people wanting me to share my experiences. This is because I haven't seen a great number of people that are curious about this. There's something I'd like to know: How many academics or university students are there amongst you? Are the majority of the others involved with NGOs?

Participant: *A portion of them work at NGOs, some don't.*

I was born in 1961, in Erzurum. I grew up in Istanbul. After graduating from Istanbul Technical University, I joined the naval forces thinking that the best kind of civil service job is being an army officer. I quit after I finished my compulsory service. I have some experience in the private sector, but my main vocation is Eko-Politik. I used to go to Mustafa Çalık's *Türkiye Günlüğü* even back when I was an army officer in Ankara. Mümtaz'er Türköne and I and some others would take classes from İlber Ortaylı. We were together with all of Ankara's intellectuals, ATO, and so on. I was a sympathizer of the national struggle group in my high school and university years. I've written *Türk Sağı* with Ahmet Davutoğlu inspired by those experiences. I wrote a lengthy article titled "The Problems of Turkish Sufism in Turkey." Recently there has been the Kurdish experience both in and outside of Turkey. That was also a good experience for us but of course, it doesn't mean anything if you cannot act on these experiences and if there aren't a lot of people to share them with.

I'll make an introduction to Eko-Politik first. Then I thought that we could get into how it was established. Here you are seeing an action report. We tried to write it when Eko-Politik was shutting down. The contents section lists the work we've carried out. We've actively worked on the Mosul State from 2005 onwards. The question of how integration between Turkey and Kurds, Turks, Arabs, and Yazidis living in Mosul can work and how this can be actualized through both international law and sociological and political means. Of course, we need to think of this as a peace project rather than as an irredentist understanding. We've produced a documentary on this. The documentary consists of six parts

and it is thirty-three minutes long. We will also be publishing an international article. We're releasing a book about this as well.

The "Turkey's Larger Framework" (*Türkiye'nin Büyük Çatısı*) study; this was very important. People from both the Kurdish political intellectual movement and the Turkish nationalist intellectual movement were involved in this work.

We've done a project called Hidden Siege (*Gizli Kuşatılmışlık*) in Northern Cyprus. In this study, we've looked at identity issues in Northern Cyprus, meaning the alienation between not just Turks and Greeks, but also between the two generations of Turkish immigrants that have migrated respectively in 1974 and 1980. The Turkish government ostracizes Cypriot Turks. In fact, let me give you an example of this. Vamık Volkan and I went to the minister dealing with issues on Cyprus back then. We told him about the problems facing Cyprus. The minister said, "We built so many mosques, so many religious schools, but we still couldn't teach them how to perform wudu," and Vamık Hoca's face got all red, like a deep cherry-red. There, we did studies on attitudes like these.

We started working on this "Turkey's Big Framework" study with the motto "aforementioned, unknown, matter." This means that there is a notorious matter that everyone knows and talks about, but shouldn't really be public. 3M: aforementioned, unknown, matter. So, this is how we handled the name of the Kurdish problem and it seems that we're back to that. We had formed core teams with lots of groups within this structure. This core group included lots of people ranging from Seydi Fırat, Altan Tan, Mete Yazar to Durmuş Hocaoğlu, from Murat Belge to Musa Serdar Çelebi, and we met with them methodologically.

On this matter of the Mosul State and the Irak Workshop - a group called the Mosul State Council had been established. This was a group that was formed after the US's intervention in Iraq in 1990. Its leader was Sheikh Mahmut Berzenci's nephew and was largely influenced by the Berzenci and Caf clans; they were defending the idea of a Mosul State Parliament that included the Turkmens. They were also defending a formation in which they could discuss liberation from the Iraqi State, the status of becoming an internationally recognized independent state, and even the possibility of joining Turkey. We worked with them for a while as Eko-Politik. In the end, I took their representatives to Binali Bey when he was acting as the Prime Minister. This Mosul State study was extremely interesting because it involved Kurdish nationalists, neo-nationalists and Turkish nationalists. Everyone perceived things from their own viewpoint.

Everyone had a different motive. They were like separate qiblas in the same mosque - but they were at a mosque, nonetheless.

We did the first study with Vamık Volkan at the beginning of 2009. This was the meeting where we first started discussing issues of Kurdish identity and the Kurdish problem with Turkish nationalists: Durmuş Hocaoğlu, Altan Tan, Feruz Ahmet, Fuat Keyman, Mesut Yeğen, Vedat Bilgin, İbrahim Kalın, Mesut Yüksel, and Cevat Öneş. So, it was a meeting that was held before these discussions had taken hold in Turkey. The specialty of this meeting was that the opposite sides were brought together. Durmuş Hocaoğlu says, "We are the founding constituent: like the White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestants, we are the Sunni, Turkish, Hanafis. We have the duty of ruling other ethnic constituents and we have the right to power. We'll use this power to fix things if need be." Opposite him, Gültan Kışanak was talking about something different. They could talk about the same issues as well.

Let's get back to the topic of Cyprus we were just discussing. What are the problems within the identities in Cyprus? We talked about traumas, their social repercussions, things that have been done to reach a solution, and the links between Cypriot Turks and Turkey. These people have a solid team. It includes people from MIT, as well as those that assert that Northern Cyprus should be annexed to the Greeks. There was also the former minister of foreign affairs.

This was the first meeting held in Turkey. There were about fifty-sixty people gathered at the Dedeman Hotel in November of 2009. You'll see that the attendee list lacks no one. Avni Özgüven, Ayhan Bilgen, Sabancı University's head of Conflict Resolutions Ayşe Betül Çelik, Cevat Öneş, one of the senior executives of the National Struggle Movement Cevat Özkaya, Deniz Ülke Arıboğan, Esra Çuhadar - Bilkent University's head of Conflict Resolutions - Devrim Gürkan Zengin, Halit Yalçın, Hamdullah Öztürk from the *Zaman* newspaper, Hatip Dicle, İsmail Küçükkaya, Mazhar Bağlı, Medaim Yanık, Mesut Yeğen, Osman Bostan, Özlem Tanberk, Özden Zeynep Oktav, Raif Türk, Ruşen Çakır, Sema Sezer - who was involved in MIT at the time - , Selahattin Kaya, Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Şaban Gülbahar, the list continues.

Look, they are all together in this photograph. These are the chief negotiators in the first group, the president of the Turkish Hearths Durmuş Hocaoğlu, and the others are observers. Sırrı Süreyya Önder and some others are amongst the observers. Tayyip Bey sent the minister of internal affairs at the last minute. This was about a week before the initiative. We were going ahead of the initiative back then.

This is what we did here. Flash TV's morning shows were more active and got more views back then. A nationalist, Yılmaz Tunca, who is one of the well-meaning old-timers that I think is with the national struggle movement, headed it. Although not as popular as İsmail Küçükkaya's, his morning show was also quite popular, and we asked him for a favor. We brought together two opposites on each show. For instance, one show featured Halit Yalçın and the president of the Turkish Hearths Cezmi Bayram. This person you see here is a recent retiree of MİT and nationalist Sema Hanım and our own Seydi Fırat. These are Mete Yarar and Gültan Kışanak.

These are the core team meetings we held once a week. Let's see who's here. Musa Serdar Çelebi, Altan Tan, Seydi Fırat, Mete Yarar, Murat Belge, Özlem Kamber, Raif Türk are present. The process went like this, together once a week; because in order for this to become a process, people need to meet frequently and at regular intervals. Of course, these are all of our students accompanying us. The students not only have grants from us, but they adapt to the workings of civil society and learn from experience. We pick out the students to include nationalists, Turkish idealists, Kurds, leftist students, everyone. Foreigners also started showing attention to this. That was the time when there was the issue of children throwing stones, so our team made a trip to Hakkari. Psychoanalysts that did voluntary consultancies were there too. We did extended studies on the issues of the children throwing stones.

As you'll remember, Ahmet Türk was punched in Samsun. At that time, we contemplated what we could do on the matter and asked Musa Serdar Çelebi for a favor. We would be making a get well soon visit and the media would cover it. The media gave us their support more openly back then. They really got on this too. We went to Ahmet Türk's house in Ankara with Mr. Çelebi to offer our get well soon wishes. Musa Serdar Çelebi is someone that has supported us a lot on this matter. He's someone that can still support this solution even though he's facing peer pressure from the Turkish nationalist group that he's a part of.

Then we spread to different cities. We established a branch for Eko-Politik in Mersin. There too gathered people from different backgrounds with an aim to look out for such differences. There too people from the area met once a month, including the Yoruks from Mersin, people from HDP, artists from differing groups, and even the governor gave us its support from time to time. We got to know so many people. But of course, they were anxious when we first approached them. Who are you, are you working for the state? Are you Fethullahists, who are you? This is how we think in this country, we express

judgments, but these judgments have been broken down with time. This was one of the good parts of the job.

Vamık Volkan and I then did educational work with our students on the issues of masses, trauma, negotiation management, etc. We got students from different regions onboard with the support of Türk Telekom. Vamık Volkan trained these students in a camp for 1-2 days. Halit Yalçın and some others also came. People interested in NGOs like you also attended those kinds of meetings.

We worked a lot in Hakkari. ATİ İnsanlar Derneği (ATİ People's Foundation) gave us huge support there. We had many studies similar to this. There was support from Muhsin Kızılkaya and Seydi Fırat. The then governor of Hakkari and current central governor Muammer Bey is a very decent person, one of the few such people I've seen.

Of course, we notified Abdullah Gül as we did all these things. Thankfully, he accepted and came. In fact, he even said that Seydi Fırat was problematic, that he'd accept him too, and that he should also come to the Huber Mansion. I think he couldn't get permission though; documents were traveling back and forth. He couldn't make it, but I think it would have been good during that period if he had. Who was there? Ayşe Hoca, Altan Tan, Deniz Büke, Murat Belge, Ümit Fırat, Musa Serdar Çelebi, Halit Yalçın, and Mete Yarar were there. We gathered all the people we could.

Again we did a similar thing in Malatya. We gathered the opinion leaders of the region, but the opposite opinion leaders, because convincing them is difficult too. The nationalist opinion leaders waiting to be nominated by MHP are especially guarded. It's like the way İyi Parti officials are scared nowadays. It was very difficult to convince them, but we've seen tremendous support from the nationalist opinion leaders who didn't have high hopes for the politics of the region. We also had a large number of idealists amongst us.

We gathered such groups as Hakkari, Mersin, and Siirt in Istanbul in one of the last big meetings we held. At that time, the Undersecretariat of Public Security also supported that meeting. Otherwise, we wouldn't have been able to afford it. There were about fifty-sixty people, it was quite an interesting meeting.

We were now at a period when things were really starting to heat up. The atmosphere was tense. They shouted slogans and such when we went to Hakkari. There were many armoured vehicles and security teams around when Governor Muammer Bey was taking us to the meeting hall. We asked

him to remove them. Thankfully, he took the risk and removed them. We entered inside. Cengiz Kapmaz was molding the crowd, manipulating them somewhat provocatively. If there was a slogan being shouted, he encouraged another round, and so on. Cengiz and Murat Belge spoke. Then it was Musa Serdar Çelebi's turn. There was a horrible dead silence because people were wondering what he would say. Çelebi started speaking three or four sentences in Kurdish. People were surprised, wondering what was going on. Then a frantic applause erupted in the meeting hall. After that, Çelebi started talking about what he knew. We had also brought along some idealist groups to the meeting. Once we got to chatting on things like "where are you from, what do you do, how's Istanbul" with those kids, the normalization process had started. Of course, before when we had taken Cezmi Bayram from the Turkish Hearths to Hakkari, we had been to a wedding where they were dancing the *halay*. They announced in Kurdish that there were visitors from Istanbul and out of respect, all the folk songs played after were in Turkish. Of course, Cezmi Bayram experiences things like this. Now he is the president of the Istanbul Turkish Hearth

The meeting we held in Siirt was also interesting. We went to Northern Iraq as the Eko-Politik team for our Mosul State work. In cities like Süleymaniye and Erbil, we met with important clan leaders, non-governmental organizations, and political parties one by one to discuss how we can manage to come together. After two months, we decided to hold a meeting about this in the same format. We had a meeting with the Süleymaniye University Senate as well. There, we discussed everything including the Big Kurdistan utopia as the Eko-Politik team. Mahmut Berzenci's nephew, who gave us his support, headed it. There was Sheikh Salar. We had again brought along young idealists and neo-nationalists there with us. There was a neo-nationalist lady, Gamze Kona. She was an academic instructor, a tough neo-nationalist. When she started her words by saying "We actually don't like Kurds at all," all the snoozing clan leaders opened their eyes at once. The dialogues started off in a tense way but in the end, they were brought together. Then we moved on to Cyprus. It was the same issue: the identity composition of Cyprus.

We're firing our last rounds here because clashes have slowly started. In fact, we issued a press release as Eko-Politik: "In difficult times, people should speak, not use guns." Here is Yavuz Aslan Argun. He is the founder of the National Struggle Movement and died just recently. Vedat Bilgin, the current counsel for the President, Selim Okçuoğlu from the Kurdish movement, Ömer Laçiner.

Lastly, we went to Hakkari. Thanks again to Muammer Bey, Musa Serdar Çelebi, and the then-mayor Bedirhanoglu. It was Ramadan and we broke fast. People from Hakkari really like Musa Çelebi. We issued a press release at that time, as you know the clashes had already started. Then, Eko-Politik dissolved. Our final activities were on how to bring together the Shiites and Sunnis of Bahrain and Lebanon.

This is the summary - it started in 2005 and ended towards the end of 2011. One of the biggest problems here is this: for instance someone - I think he was the cultural affairs director of Eyüp Municipality, a decent intellectual Islamist - made a remark to me, "With the Eko-Politik experience, you have shown us the best model of relations that the Turkish right wing and the conservative community can have with the others," he said. "We couldn't have managed to build such a model of relations," he continued. This was one of the comments that got my attention.

Eko-Politik is now shut down. Back then there was the last public security undersecretary, Murat Çelikkol, I think. Then he became a congressman from CHP. I think that sometimes people can come to the fore rather than institutions or conspiracies. As we were discussing these issues, he was about to be removed from duty. He said, "I get it, you are neither an Islamist nor a Fethullahist, I'll give you my support." With that support, we held the meeting in Europe. The Kurdish diaspora in Europe, the Turkish-Islam Federation, and some others had come together.

Such a model was established. They often attribute this model to Vamık Volkan but Vamık was two things for us. Firstly, he was a brand. Lots of people would come to us when we said that Volkan was with us. The problem is that if we said any other random name, no one would come. Secondly, Vamık Volkan lent us methodological flexibility, because he had a core model. We executed that core model by interpreting it in a wider manner. Of course, the model has its drawbacks and troubles, but there needs to be a methodology. Vamık Volkan also has really significant experiences. He's a person that has been nominated for the Nobel Prize four times. Vamık Volkan is the second person to have the authority to stay at Freud's house after his death. Back in the day, he brought together Menahem Begin and Enver Sedat at Camp David.

There have been interesting anecdotes. To tell you the truth, I was not well acquainted with the Kurdish issue when I was working. We were sitting next to each other with an important Kurdish politician in one of the first big meetings. When I said, "What you have is a political pathology, you resign

your problems to a cult leader, isn't this incoherent?" he said to me, "He is our leader, our mentor, please don't argue on this Tarık Bey." I understood that okay, that's where they're at. So later, we built the game based on this. The turning point of the game for us was when we understood some things more clearly. We're trying to understand. This is not a matter of opposition.

We worked a lot on the rights of Turkmens during our Mosul State issue. There, we had Avni Lütfođlu. He's still a tough nationalist. He used to be a parliamentarian for the Turkmens in Baghdad. He said to me, "Mr. Çelenk, you should look out for the right to education in one's mother tongue and other such issues. You see we live in these conditions in Iraq as well, and the Baghdad government gives us these rights." The person who's telling me this is a pro-nationalist.

Two things made me understand the issue a lot better. Vamık Volkan had a Kemalist jargon. He had a book on Atatürk. Later it was banned, and this became a problem. He also became interested in Öcalan. Of course, this wasn't received well by a certain entity but Vamık Volkan realigned himself to the standards of the new situation during this process. Vamık Volkan and I went to Abdullah Gül when he was serving as President to tell him about the issues.

This is what I told Rifat Hisarcıkliođlu about the Wise Men matter: "The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey has an abundance of resources. If I may say so, they can have a plane ready to go to Belgrade for dinner on a whim. If you gave us one year's worth of money spent on such a plane, we could establish a center for dialogue and conflict resolution with this much experience." Ahmet Bey was prime minister then. First, it was Tayyip Bey, then Ahmet Bey. "Tell Tayyip Bey, once he says yes, we'll get right on it." Then we were told to talk to Ahmet Bey. Unfortunately, neither Tayyip Bey nor Ahmet Bey - although he's our friend now - gave us their support. Of course, when we couldn't get support, we had problems with our internal management. When you give so many young people so much authority, they all start seeing themselves as Turkey's He-Man. Beyond certain managerial problems, also because neither the minister of foreign affairs nor the prime minister ever said "you did a good job on this, congratulations," to Abdullah Tivnikli and I suppose also because they wanted indirectly for this business to be over, this matter was over and done with. I think it was a true non-governmental organization and it was an establishment that sought things out and could grow on its own resources.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *How do you bring together such different people? Don't you feel any strain, any difficulties? You make the president of the Turkish Hearths and an ex-member of PKK sit across from each other at the same table and you discuss issues. One of them talks about the Turkish right to rule. The other one has the perspective that there should be an independent Kurdistan. How do you bring together such radically different people that have such a sharp contrast of opinion? I'm looking at this list and I'm thinking that you can never bring such a group of people together today.*

Of course, primarily, I've never been on any side. When this is the case, they label you as an agent of the deep state or a spy of some sort. There can be difficulties like this. Unfortunately, this is the case in eastern societies like ours, but I think sincerity is crucial. If people see your sincerity and you make sure not to scare them off, they open their doors to you. So, we've done lots of persuading. Also, they know and trust me in the nationalist, right wing circles. I don't have any problems there. We've had a lot of trouble with the convincing of other groups. We haven't had any difficulty with people from the nationalist circle. They said that they would come if they would be free to speak their minds. We told them that they could speak about whatever they preferred, that speaking is the most important thing in this matter anyway.

Of course, what I see today in the case of İyi Parti for instance, is that they don't have any information on the Kurdish problem whether good or bad. They act on a reflexive worry rather than on information; especially on the Kurdish problem but on other matters too. Other groups also have serious prejudices. You are the one who can talk to them about these. I don't want to delve into social media. When I go into these issues on social media, I'm bound to piss some people off, but I want to be able to keep a decent relationship with these people so that I can bring them out to such meetings in the future. You have to keep the middle ground, but you can speak more freely when face-to-face. I'm one of the few people that can talk to both sides in this manner anyway. We say things like, "let's not risk it, just leave it for now, it's for the sake of the country and so on," but there are serious problems on either side.

You bring people together but the overall situation in the country is based on alienating people from each other and thus ruling over them easily. It's almost impossible for you to accomplish things in such an environment anyway. They do the same things in the Middle East as well. When you look at

it, they prefer to break people apart and rule over them that way. But I still think that it was a success story. For instance, Cezmi Bayram, nationalist, Cezmi Bayram and Murat Belge are two people that have had a fistfight back in the day. One is a leader of the left wing and the other is a leader of the right wing. Their relationship was normalized after two-three stages. For example, Musa Serdar Çelebi and Murat Belge became close friends.

Yes, he's a celebrity now and his job has become more about financial gain and sensational content but in those days, he was an important acquaintance that shared our load. At least, no one would consider something that Musa Serdar or Mete Yarar was in as a bad thing. Mete Yarar's officer friends from back then would visit us some nights at Eko-Politik. In fact, they attended and listened in on a few meetings free from their official identities. These were significant things, because if you really want to accomplish something, you need to be on good terms with both the civil society and the state. What I'm saying is communication - so not pawns of the state or of Kandil. You need to be able to establish a decent relationship and keep it at a distance. Then you can do things.

Of course, Vamık Volkan is important, and the discipline of psychology is important in these kinds of work. It's interesting that we've had up to a hundred students come and go. Even though they've criticized us a lot, I've calculated that 66 of them are now in the most credible and critical positions of the state. One of them is the Washington correspondent for the Anadolu Agency and another one is the Moscow correspondent. There are two counsels in the Külliye.⁵ The news coordinator for TRT is our friend. So, these guys can think like you and me, but they've reached places without any trouble because they know exactly where to speak and what to speak about. People who are more genuine and that express themselves better can be useful for everyone. This was one of the experiences of Eko-Politik.

Participant: *This is a very authentic experience and listening to it was delightful. However, have you had any mistakes, shortcomings, or conundrums that you have critiqued within yourselves, seen as faulty, or regretted, especially looking at it from today? Unfortunately, this and many other efforts like this have been blown up as a result of things. Yes, it may have realized certain possibilities for people that continue in this line of work. These people may have become competent but unfortunately, there hasn't been much of a societal gain in the end. How did you evaluate this, especially with the other core team?*

5 Islamic-ottoman social complex.

When we went to Mersin with Wise Men, the groups there said that this many people couldn't have come together if it wasn't for Eko-Politik. If a person believes in history, in Allah, and in the afterlife, and has a certain equation of conscience - so if he can have a clear conscience thinking, "I've done a good deed," - you somehow end up putting something down on history. A person doesn't have to be incredibly capable anyway. Meaning that when you look at it, he's responsible not for the victory, but rather the expedition. What mistakes have we made? Maybe we treated the students too democratically. This may seem odd to you, but I've seen this weakness in our students. When they encounter nationalist groups, they become nationalist and statist. So, when they encounter a KCK group, this time they start saying things like let's practice autonomy in the association. So, we saw that there needed to be an establishment of a hierarchy and institutionalization in the structure. These were issues that created frailties for us.

I think this experience will gain value in the future when we ask, "Let's see if we have anything good in the old books?" For instance, I tried to find things from 100-150 years ago when I was writing about the Turkish right wing. I couldn't find anything in the near past, so I decided I'd look at the more distant past. I found Kâtip Çelebi for example, who has wonderful ideas. I think that maybe some people will find our ideas.

Then there is also the Wise Men issue. In my opinion, the Wise Men issue is one of the fundamental problems for the Turkish right wing and has to do with the fact that it couldn't generate a project. Because as far as I've seen, Wise Men was a project of Öcalan. I'll have my people; you'll have your people. So, it was made up of people entering it from the quotas of Öcalan, the state, AKP, and some others that more or less understood the situation.

Beyond that, the Wise Men matter developed as a public relations issue. In five-star hotels... Ours were like that. Participants couldn't choose the hotels. Then I said that this wouldn't work. I got Muhsin Kızılkaya and told the others no. I took the car and went to the Tahtacı Alevi villages. We had a bit of a conversation. They said things like "you get paid a 40 thousand lira salary." The men attempted to beat us up. That's the real deal. Towards the evening Muhsin and I escaped, there were bodyguards as well. I think Tayyip Bey called Alevi houses "revelry houses."

How does Mr. Erdoğan practice politics? He claims you right away, gets you behind him, accepts you as his child, and protects you. So, when he said that Wise Men were his people, MHP and CHP took a stance right away. That's

when the deal was over if you ask me. There also wasn't any planning on what the endgame could be in the matter of Wise Men. So, the fact that the Turkish right wing can't generate projects or do any planning, there's no longer any long-term thinking.

I'll give you one or two examples that I always use. One day I'm on the TV. First, the Wise Men issue came up. There's Şirin Payzın, across from me is Berhan Şimşek the former CHP member, and also Yaşar Okuyan. They're continuously ganging up on me. Şirin Payzın said, "What are you going to tell us, oh Wise Men?" There was a maneuver there and that maneuver saved Wise Men. I replied, "We are heading off to listen to the public, not tell things to the public." They went silent. This time there were reports saying that all the Wise Men members were heading off to listen to the public. That's fine too. I still think we can benefit from those reports. Of course, there's only so much listening you can do, tell us what the endgame is. No one knows anything.

Lastly, I'll tell you this anecdote. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu once again did a great job of organizing and we went to our first meeting in Burdur. The Yoruks greeted us with a flourish of drums and zurnas. We sat down for a Yoruk breakfast. The whole press was there. A local mukhtar asked us, "My chief, what is this Resolution Process?" Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu was frozen, like this. He made eye contact, looked at me again, and said, "The Resolution Process is a good thing, my friends," and that was it.

As you know, the situation continued as a stance that the two sides took against each other. The Organization took a stance. There were tragedies after this tension. If Turkey could solve the Kurdish problem - Ahmet Davutoğlu has a fine saying: "This is a project for a century,"- it would be very forceful in the Middle East today. Its economy would be so much stronger. It would have serious trumps against the European Union and could enter it. It could accomplish internal consolidation, etc.

Participant: *If you were to do this work again, what would be the things you would describe as "something we're going to have to do but shouldn't this time"?*

There's a habit in Turkey. I don't know whether it originates from the German authoritarian understanding of the state after the First World War, or that the Committee of Union and Progress copied this understanding, or that the Organization also tried to copy it indirectly. They fight and they fight, and then they become buddies with the side that has done the most killing. Then

they fight again. There isn't any democratic reconciliation involved in this at all. They just talk. It's like two separate entities becoming friends. There is no need for that kind of friendship.

If you ask me, the state has to especially deal with the issues of democratic individual rights, socio-economic wealth, the right to one's mother tongue, and the definition of the individual in our Constitution, without trying to address anyone. So, you fight the Organization, they put down their weapons, you act as if they're not even there... Collective democratization will make Turkey, the state, and everyone stronger. If people are able to speak their mother tongue in Turkey and become the commander of armed forces regardless of their Kurdish identity - whatever it takes to make this happen in a democratic structure - I think that things like negotiating with the Organization or rehabilitating defectors are secondary issues.

Turkey's real problem is that it's rapidly slipping away from democracy. Maybe there can be a new resolution process in a structure that cannot be democratized, but how will this be? Sending letters on TRT Kurdî, etc... The important thing is to be democratized, to be able to express oneself easily. Without worrying about saying the wrong things and being punished for no reason. If I were a person of high-level status, I would offer democratic individual rights in the new constitution that the whole society would accept without dispute. These wouldn't be the rights of one group, which I think would turn us into Iraq, but we don't have a structure based on clans and groups. As I've observed in Diyarbakır, there's a serious inclination towards the bourgeois culture here anyway; people here cannot be ruled by those in the mountains. The structure of people's minds changes a lot. Here, there may or may not be an identity claim like those of the Catalans in the wealthy parts of Spain. I think the issue here is about the freedom of movement and expression. Other things can be discussed only when these freedoms are securely given.

If you ask me, PYD's transformation should be supported. If they can, Kandil's transformation should also be supported, and only by contributing to this transformation can Turkey become more authoritative in the Middle East. Turkish Special Forces should sit down with YPG. They should build their hospital there, in Kobane. Instead of patrolling after the US, they should build their special structures there with a consensus. They should do it just as they brought in Suleyman Shah, and they should contribute to their transformation, but for this, there needs to be a project, a doctrine. This doesn't exist; it can never exist in the Turkish right wing. The English are the only ones that can have such a perspective. As I was waiting for friends today, I saw that the

English had made some investments. They've allocated a fund to observe how the seals in Antarctica can migrate without falling prey to white sharks, and they're making recordings. I think that we can only generate solutions to these issues once we reach such a point.

These things seem hard, but it is a reality that the Turkish state is strong, and that it can sustain this. It can also choose to assert some kind of assimilation in the matter of identity. At least people may say, "Living in Istanbul or Diyarbakır is better than living in Baghdad." I've seen Baghdad. Erbil is the best city there but even living in Erbil has many risks. The Turkish state can keep it going at least for five or six years. It will ruin the economy though. But I think that some of their current claims - although indirectly - have been proven right upon seeing that they can sustain this even with their one-sided outlook and unilateral security policies. The state's assertion on town clashes has proven right. Sustainable things like, for example, not intervening with the cultural fabric and things from the past in relation to the development of Diyarbakır. I'm not saying "good" things, but rather "sustainable" things. If these were to be state policy, if there really were a deep state, then I think we could discuss these things as I've said. It would have been good to have Eko-Politik there too.

Participant: *Is there a chance for that in today's climate? Is there a chance or a convenient environment for doing work in the same vein as Eko-Politik's work?*

It could happen provided that we don't overstep your boundaries, but of course, you don't attract much attention because you do it more locally. If you cause some people to lose votes or they sense that you may cause some others to gain votes, these are problematic matters.

Participant: *There is actually also a thesis like this in the matter of conflict resolution, that these kinds of problems disrupt relationships. These ruined relationships create certain sub-level systems and the system is based on this. If there is to be the construction of peace, while crises are being solved, conflict resolution should also be handled as a tool that can transform relationships. The thing that matters is to transform the relationship. To summarize, there is a theory that claims that the transformation of relationships is at the center of the construction of peace. Also, opposite sides need to actually have contact with each other for this to happen. In this sense, Eko-Politik is a valuable experience. What I wonder is this. When we think about the period between 2005-2011, which is an experience of six to seven years, did this experience at least transform the relationships of the*

parties involved? We can see that enormous work has been done when we look at these names. If the relationships of these people were transformed, then it would mean that tremendous progress has been made. Were these relationships transformed?

Fifteen of those people have passed away; Durmuş Hocaoğlu, Turan Saritemur, Kurdish intellectual. Of course, ten or eleven years have passed since then. Some of them are sick; I think Cevat Öneş is sick. But if we were to say to that network of people, “come on, we’re going to get together today,” they would all show up. No worries there. That’s something too. I’ve told these things during the Wise Men process. I’ve also told these at length to the prime minister. I’ve thematically shown the photographs. Our conservative businessmen - if I may exaggerate a little - expect to be rewarded with mansions in heaven when they do a good deed. Will this kind of deed warrant a mansion in heaven? No, it won’t.

Participant: *I have three questions. You particularly use the term “Wise Men” We used the term “Wise People.” Is this something you want to emphasize especially?*

No, not especially. It’s used as *Wiseman* in English too.

Participant: *Yes, the same problem exists there as well. My other question is: the Eko-Politik mechanism, its phenomenon, can be very useful especially in Turkey during all kinds of processes; so, what has been the thing that nudged it, that brought it to action? Does Eko-Politik recognize the problem on its own and intervene, or do others alert it? My third question: You’ve said that your students couldn’t be mediators; that they kept switching sides depending on who they were with. So, have you been able to preserve your impartiality during this process?*

If you look at it from the example of a psychiatrist, the interaction is similar to dealing with a patient, there’s logic there in that sense, you feel it as a person. Say, the woman has lost her child and she’s sharing her pain with you.

Whatever I thought back then, I still think the same. There hasn’t been a change in my thinking. There may have been a change in our attitudes. For instance, there is a foundation called the Avrasya Bir Vakfı (Eurasia One Foundation). It has a very strict environment that consists of conservatives with a median age of over seventy. If I were to speak there, I wouldn’t be affected by it. In fact, one day I took there with me a friend, one that hates PKK, too. None

of them really liked what he had to say about the Kurdish reality because they were the only ones that could listen to him in those circumstances. You can't take someone from HDP there. But, you know, the safety of the state, of the pashas... I told them I had a decent friend, I even had him talk about the issues himself. But they couldn't put up even with him.

What was the motivation of Eko-Politik? I think an angry constituent rules everything; it's true. İbn-i Haldun and Arnold Toynbee are right. There needs to be a founding angry spirit. It's not CIA's job to come and make this happen, like the mind-control stuff we've seen in Mel Gibson movies. People matter a lot. I think that a person that can lend an amateur plane on the Red Square can do these things as well. We had a serious ideal back then: to save the country, etc. Of course, this also stems partly from having a right wing background. Murat Sofuoğlu who was with me was like that. He was the last of the National Struggle Movement Mohicans. There was a harsh idealism.

We wanted to have the support of AKP back then, but for some reason they never gave it, and this demotivated us. In the same period as us, as Eko-Politik was going on, SETA was established. The financial support difference between the two of us was twentyfold. Staying away from the ruling government and the fact that they never accepted any of our requests to meet was something that motivated us and maybe what made us strong. If you're looking for the motivation behind that, I think it lies in the sociological analysis of what we call "anger". Of course, it also lies in intent. The late Abdullah Bey used to say, "I ask you to come to Yeşilköy where the airport is and you end up in Edirne. You should hit the brakes a little!" and he was scared. He's a businessman after all. This happens when you delve into risky matters. Anyway, when it became about an initiative, he tried to benefit from that. He had to cut out support when, as we know, these things ended up in quarrelling and fighting.

Participant: *The reports show a dispersion of work sites. I mean, Mosul, Kirkuk, the Kurdish question, etc. Doubtless they have commonalities, but what comes to the fore is partly an emphasis on the National Pact. Meaning that it seems like the annexation of Kirkuk and Mosul. Of course, the players have also added the Kurdish question to their agendas. It seems that today it would be impossible for the two sides to come together, but this is somewhat in the spirit of the period. Not too far off from the perspective of the ruling government, so to say. Hence, it's at a place where it doesn't even face it, clash with it. Tomorrow - although there's talk of it even today, maybe it's not too far off - there may be a need for a similar field of work soon. It seems like a system of work that depends on those factors.*

There are two things here. One is that identity conflict is the common denominator: identity and alienation. The same problem exists between the Turks in Cyprus, and Mosul is relevant here again.

Participant: *Actually, they contribute to each other, smooth transitions. For example, let's say the Sheikh Berzenci clan in Mosul, in the end, each of them corresponds to a different reality. This is important both for its historical roots and for its current relations. Isn't it possible to conduct this work without the need to be under the protection of the government? I'm saying so because of this: For instance, you say that the work we conduct here is more local, but really this kind of work contains the essence of all that work in terms of motivation. Can't we accomplish these kinds of work in a place with so much intellectual accumulation like Turkey?*

We didn't have that professionalism; we were amateurs. For instance, TESEV, or PODEM which came after TESEV, has teams of people. Boys and girls with masters and doctorate degrees, with advanced-level second languages, kids that are integrated into the world, they receive funds from the European Union for a duration of six months, or one to two years. Maybe you have these kinds of teams too. Our guys were very amateur. We neither had the time nor the professionalism to deal with a European Union fund or whatever else. Also, it wasn't received well to get funding from the European Union back then. The truth of the matter is that we need to write these things down, the society would benefit from knowing these things.

Participant: *When you look at it from today's perspective, the topic of fearing to repeat past mistakes if there were to be a new process... You describe those young people as amateurs because of their inexperience, of course. Maybe the documenting wasn't done to your liking or the institutional structure didn't quite settle. Everyone dispersed and considered his/her own career and future. Then there wasn't much accumulation of knowledge left. Other than the things in your memory and the names listed in the documents you've shown us, it's like you don't really exist as a group that can reach us today, right? Will it be possible to sustain this today with a different set of tools? Do you see around you any means that seem like they can make it happen with the little resources we have at hand, or how would you integrate the youth more? Would you build sub-commissions? They would produce brief reports of your meetings. The discussions would take off from there. They would be in the back, working as a shadow cabinet. "Wise People" sounds like old people, I don't know but maybe it could have continued.*

That's what was supposed to happen. Turkey has such an environment that... It's a place where you need to get a single person's permission, mediation, and where you have to wait your turn just to get a simple book out. Then, when you say, "I'm building a serious conflict resolution structure; I'm developing both a platform and a methodology that aims to resolve issues in a constructive manner in the Middle East and Turkey," the existing political mindset distances you away because it knows that it can't control you, even though it might not see you as a direct threat. It's not about you being a threat; it's about whether or not they can control you. They wouldn't come near what they can't control. They have an approach of saying, "Okay, you're a familiar friend, but we can never control you."

If Turkey becomes democratized, then we'll be sitting at the European Union, a couple of guys in a huddle. People that are all professionals, nearing their retirement age; these can happen. But I don't think that such an environment has matured in Turkey yet. If they come up with a resolution process, I don't think it will be very lasting. Even if there's a resolution process, it won't be for the long-term. These are all seen as tactics, as moves. I don't see a state that can build such a mindset.

Participant: *You don't seem to have any hope for a solution to the problem.*

History is such that it hits rock bottom, then rises way up. I can't refute that. I think that there is potential in this period of history but there isn't a political movement or event that can seize on this potential. Otherwise, Turkey has so many important people and so much accumulation of experience. I bet there are many people that can come up with a resolution process right in this room, even. But it all depends on the political equation. Even if we don't like the Kemalist state, it had institutions. The state doesn't have any institutions left. No institutions exist, and bureaucracy doesn't work. A person can express things easily and find a listener only in a system that works. The listeners are just a couple of relatives or a handful of people now; no one else. How are you going to do this work?

I think that maybe it can be done on a low profile, rather than being too out there. There can be one or two formations like Eko-Politik in Istanbul. This can be low profile. My fear is that, I think if a resolution process is imposed during an authoritarian regime, say they meet with İmralı and so on, that this will have a worse outcome. The resolution process can be healthy and long-term only when carried out in a democratic structure.

Participant: *If we are to view the question of how the two groups came together, it was without a doubt a lot easier to bring those groups together in that particular political climate. Now it's a little bit harder.*

There were difficulties during that period too. There was a lot of peer pressure, but the political environment was better. Nowadays the political environment is worse but there is less peer pressure.

Participant: *You're right, I ask you as someone that has managed all those projects and activities. What do you think are the reasons behind the failure of the Resolution Process, or was the society really not ready for it? I'm curious about your unfiltered opinions on this matter.*

If you look at it, our society is fanatical. I think that the two sides understood the resolution issue very differently during that time. Both sides were saying "resolution" but meaning different things. They were praying to different qiblas, so to speak. The state saw the solution as disarmament and a little bit of an increase in tax revenues in a few regions.

Participant: *If we were to look at it from AKP's perspective, was there any political concern?*

It wasn't very consuming, but yes. But at the same time, the Organization had an attitude of thinking, "We're getting our sovereignty in little pieces at a time. So, we'll take our clothes off and put on the municipal uniform. We'll start managing laws from there." Both sides were thinking in very utopian terms. There needs to be an agreement in the definition of the resolution process. Additionally, everyone should know her/his place. You have the state in front of you. If you try to make things happen based on international equations instead of your own social dynamics, you'll end up like Syria. That's a separate situation. The first problem was that their resolution process definitions were very different. There wasn't a mindset, project-based intellect, or doctrine that could be put forward together.

Participant: *Was it because of inexperience?*

Going through them can only have these experiences. Both sides saw the resolution process as a security process. So, they met in Oslo, and then took Altan Tan, Selahattin Bey and Hatip Bey to İmralı. Rather than all these things, this process requires a proper doctrine. What's going to be the result of this? Partial autonomy or full autonomy? Constitutional citizenship in a democratic

state? Where is it going to lead? In Sufism, they would show you the result of something that you just started.

Participant: *What's the minimal degree of the Kurdish reality that the Turkish right wing - it's visage both on the streets and in the state - can accept? I think that the situation for the majority of Kurds in Diyarbakır is this: There is a collective perception of seeing themselves as Kurds. You may call it a people, a community, a nation, whatever. So if the Turks are a people, we are a people too. If the Arabs are a community, then we are a community. If Persians are a nation, then we are too. Whatever the term is, they see themselves as a collective group that is equal to these three groups. What I've seen is that in reality, there's a wish to solve the issue without splitting apart and without clashing. I don't know if you all will agree, but this is where the Kurds have arrived at. We are equal to the other three groups. Whatever you call it, people, nation, ethnicity, it doesn't matter. And we're looking for ways to coexist. Now what I'm really curious about is this: Let's reverse the question of whether the Kurds are after autonomy or a federation, and ask instead, how does the Turkish right wing - on the streets and as the state - stand in relation to these requests, which door can it open?*

It varies a lot; in my time it was essentially statist. Sometimes it becomes Turkist, sometimes Islamist, and other times Kemalist. You see right now it's Turkism, neo-nationalism. Islamism has receded to the back a little. The Turkish right wing doesn't have a fundamental methodology or doctrine. MHP's perspective especially is this: "While the state is strong and seeing as we don't appear too good in the international conjuncture because of the issues with Syria, we should use our iron fist on the armed organization that uses this as a methodology of terror. We should scrape it off as much as we can. Let's go with the resolution we want while in the most advantageous window of time for us and get this issue over and done with." This is the most fundamental thing, as far as I've seen. A nation-state wants only to see uniform people after all.

It's not possible to see uniform people in the remaining population even if you exclude the Kurds. They say there should be one nation, one sect of Islam, but there doesn't exist such uniformity. We need people, ideas, and leaders that can preserve this *melting pot*. The unity of a country doesn't have to depend on a single nation, a single state. Of course, that's a unitary thing, it can't be refuted, but we can talk about the other aspects. This will work only if Turkey can be convinced that solving the Kurdish problem will help them become a stronger state and be more powerful in the world and in the Middle East, but it has to be persuaded.

Participant: *You've said that there isn't a common perception of peace. I agree with this. There really isn't a common perception of peace. Can it be obtained in time if negotiations are held in a democratic environment and certain phases can be overcome? Can the perceived mechanisms become common ground one day? I'm curious about one more thing. Why doesn't the Turkish right wing have a project? Does it not want to come up with one, or does it not need it? Does it not have such concerns on this front?*

I've especially visited Ziya Gökalp's house. I took photographs. I took a photo right where he was murdered, at the Four-Legged Minaret. The Turkish right wing originates from towns and there hasn't been a chance for a real bourgeois nationalism to be born in Turkey. There is an abundance of the populist townsfolk character in the Turkish right wing and in most parties. The bourgeoisie produces aesthetics, art, and philosophy. If the Turkish right wing could have produced a bourgeois nationalism, they could have developed a much better culture of reconciliation. It could solve the issues you have mentioned. Maybe the perception of Turanism that the Kazan Turks have produced; İlber Ortaylı is a Kazan Turk for instance, and so is Yusuf Akçura. The Turkish right wing hasn't developed a real bourgeois character that produces things separately from the state, and because it is not urban, the Turkish right wing has townsfolk nationalism. It likes the civil servant salary, keeps its distance from trade, and is a monger. That's why they won't get the Kurdish question.

Let's take İyi Parti for instance. I talk with Yavuz Ağırlioğlu regularly. I say, "Don't do it, don't fall for this." "When I see HDP people, I think of our martyrs," he says. I can understand that, but do you only think of the martyrs when you see HDP but not when others meet Öcalan? If the Turkish right wing had a few universities in the world's top thousand, or if they had one or two think tanks, the issues you've mentioned could be solved. But they keep on building universities that are all hollow. Maybe it seems easier to rule this way. It becomes a sustainable rulership.

Regarding the other question, the power lies in the state rather than in the perception of peace. It is the state that has the economy, bureaucracy, hierarchy, security forces, and strong security intelligence. It is the state that the US, Russia, and other forces from the world conjuncture would want to align with. The state somehow consolidates this by paying a huge price. Why should the public pay the price for this? Why should people die, guilty or innocent? The paradigm you've mentioned can only be changed, or solved, once there is a seed that can alter the perspective of the rulers of the state which has

been there since the Committee of Union and Progress' dealings with the Armenian matter. But if you ask me, the problem is at a sustainable level.

For instance, I've known a couple of generals that have visited the parents of PKK militants; one was a lieutenant general. He spoke to the kid at the mountain and tried to convince him. People like him a lot. They arrested him on FETÖ (Fethullah Terrorist Organization) involvement charges but let him out when it was understood that he wasn't involved. There is a need for the arrival of a cleverer and more rational mindset of the state that can consider different paradigms. I don't know if this will happen by the way of politics or something else. It's not possible to see it through in any other way. There are upsetting things too. In Colombia, things are turning over once again. These things are not easy, and we are not independent of them. But the state is powerful, and it will succeed in consolidating one way or another. The more the state is dominated by a democratic mindset, the higher the chance of these things being resolved.

Participant: *Is possession of power important in resolving the problem or the generation of peace? You said that in Colombia things were turning around. I think the main reason for this is that the Colombian state sees itself as very powerful and thinks that it can consolidate itself. Can we have social peace if the same thing were to happen here?*

The rate of people going up to the mountains has dropped. We won't embrace things like the style of the minister of internal affairs. But see, they put it out there, the rate of going to the mountains have dropped, there's peace. There's no loss of life.

Participant: *What is also possible is that today the current organization can be extinguished and tomorrow there can arise a different organization.*

Of course, but the essential thing is the production of demand. The state needs to produce this demand for everyone in society. It becomes very easy to rule once you produce demand. But their head won't wrap around such a sophisticated system of ruling; because we don't have such qualified statesmen, unfortunately. The minds that can produce the said demand are only present in the founding fathers of the US. Just look at their lives from beginning to end. If there's a state structure, a state mindset, and statesmen that can produce that demand, then the resolution you've mentioned may be possible. Why not?

Participant: *If the political environment softens a little bit - let's assume that an understanding of peace has emerged where both sides perceive resolution as the same thing - and Eko-Politik is back at work; still, things have happened. There's political history. At the very least there are the Sur incidents. How can these be repaired?*

If you ask me, it is the Turkish right wing that has to solve the Kurdish problem in Turkey. I don't know how productive this will be, but they will be the ones to make this job easier. Sometimes I'll criticize some people: Certain meetings are held in Europe where everyone is liberal, people who wouldn't even come down from their high horses. Of course, there are enormous amounts of booze going around. They're all precious, intellectual people but the base determines these matters. What lies in the heart of Turkey is rightism, and the Turkish left is romantic. The Kurds snatched their romanticism. Both sides are being romantic. The Turkish right wing needs to be persuaded and it needs to actively join the process.

Of course, there have been tragedies in the past. As Ahmet Türk said, "We are ready to forget seventeen thousand unidentified assailant cases." We need gallant people too. We can't manage without forgetting these. Of course, certain mechanisms should be established in order to allow for proper grieving, but first there needs to be a will. Is it myself, my power, the state, the nation, the public? The system can be restructured depending on the category.

Participant: *Intent is doubtless very important, but at the same time proper mourning needs to happen. We're looking at Sur right now. How long was Sur able to mourn?*

We're talking with Muhsin. Even if nothing else is done, at the very least a grave should be made for Sheikh Said. It doesn't even need to be a shrine. These can only help you grieve, but that's a different matter. You need good counseling for that. So that you can handle it without damaging the other side, it's like brain surgery. Street clashes are also a different matter.

Participant: *Aren't we sort of nearing the end on these issues? As you know about Rojava, it is there that everything has been tangled up. There's a waiting period here. The Turkish right wing isn't ready. But maybe there can be something parallel to the changes in the state. Of course, Rojava is a region in which a major conflict in international politics is taking place. The calendar is also the same. There's talk of an intervention that is being postponed continuously since the end of December. The last deadline has*

been set for the end of this month. He says, "I'll intervene if the US doesn't respond how Turkey wants it to by then." It looks as though there'll be a breaking point there.

There was a breaking point in Afrin, but it didn't have much effect. I think Afrin has very special circumstances: the presence of Russia, Turkey's relationship with Russia, etc.

Participant: *We were at a meeting with you in the US. This was what was said on the issue: What's being planned there is a construct similar to Northern Iraq, but this will be spread over a longer period. Therefore, Trump's presence in the US has most likely altered many things, but the rooted institutions in the US have still managed to persuade Trump. Otherwise, if it were up to Trump, they would have pulled out.*

If Trump were like Fethullah Gülen, the world would have gone through the wringer. Our biggest luck is that the US doesn't have a Fethullah Gülen.

Participant: *Deulet Bahçeli is a forceful leader with quite a bit of charisma. Even though we've made jokes about him, he's an important leader for some people but he can pull a one-eighty where his political gains and political equations are concerned. The "Turkish right wing" has been at the center of our discussions for some time now. How realistic is it to perceive such an unideal version of the Turkish right wing mind - although you've also criticized it for being townfolk right wing - that fixates so much on election settlements and engages in daily quarrels for power positions within itself, as a barrier in front of the resolution process? AKP's creation has also diverted from its central position and started to take on the role of a right wing party in the last five years. The disintegration of the whole Resolution Process and the return to war has more to do with losing elections in Turkey than to do with the balance in Rojava, contrary to what we all assume. We're talking about such a party and such a right wing mind. And we're talking about a Turkish majority that will bow down to everything such a party will say. Let's remember the Resolution Process, things that we wouldn't dare say, that would be seen as an offense back then are now being spoken at squares in the West, and the public has very much accepted it. It is actually very easy to produce demand in societies like ours. This really isn't something we should be afraid of. The issue is when the grassroots of the public demand war or the method of war doesn't make money. If there is a sustainable method of war now, it is only because it can make money during the elections. I can't make myself believe anything else.*

Yes, but if this method of war is supported by the economy, then it'll feed mouths. But the voters can see now that the war method doesn't feed them in the midst of a broken economy. Back when the war method wasn't hurting the economy, they only condoned it so that their present situation wouldn't be disturbed or affected negatively otherwise. I think that the language of security won't make much money now that we have a broken economy. The question is this, okay, both parties talk in a language of security, but the other opposition can't offer anything, no antithesis, no solutions, and no path. Still, I think that this will end up with an artificial resolution process through the assertion of the international equation. I'm not sure to what extent we can get authentic processes from an artificial resolution process.

The Turkish left wing is also different. As much as we think of the left as being an international structure that is defiant, liberal, and questioning, the Turkish left wing as you know is a neo-nationalist, introverted, Kemalist, Eurasianist comedy show through and through. They've been infected as much as the right wing. If the children of the right wing turn atheist or agnostic or whatever, if they start questioning religion, and in addition to these, if the right wing can no longer find convenient people to place in the companies and municipalities that they operate, they might start questioning themselves. We need a couple more generations for that to happen.

I see it. Institutionalized religion is being questioned today. I have a website called faraszade.com, I wrote about this there, and I have other articles on there too. The right wing has left nothing in the name of Islam. When you say, "Sufism", "religious order", the door needs to be open to everyone. They are going around on motorcycles with their robes and beards and with party flags in their hands. Mosques have become national mosques and convents have become national convents. How can this be, these places used to be open to everyone 24/7. They were what we knew of Mevlana and such. I think that they can start questioning themselves if they can see this process. They're going to view it as something that's over, that its economy has turned over on its head. Then they'll start searching for what they'll need to find. Of course, another problem is that the central structures are too strong. The most serious one came out of Andalusia. As you know they didn't actually have central structures there but various chiefdoms. Also, the artists were supported really well, in Baghdad too. When there was a transfer to central structures, the tradition of knowledge was lost whether they wanted to or not. Religious cults have also severed the tradition of knowledge.

Participant: *There is a term called "learning organization" in the private sector: it*

indicates organizations or companies that can learn. We can think about an organization's ability to learn in terms of the learning ability of a political party, an NGO, or a state, too. I'll say another thing related to this and pose my question after that. One of the dynamics that is taken into consideration during a social transformation is the "generation" matter. Is it a clash of class or an ethno-national conflict that determines social transformation? Another tendency on this topic is to interpret "generational conflict" as the dynamic for social transformation. What's the level of the "learning ability" of the right wing young generation? What's the potential for breaking the mould of the townsfolk nationalism you've mentioned, to step outside of it, or to regenerate them? For instance, we know clearly the regions in which AKP has experienced a crisis and has lost votes. They're losing the most support from people that are educated, urban-dwelling, and young. Is this because there is another perspective, another imagination there, or because of something else?

That's the problem. If these generations we're talking about how they can't get any grants, if they can't get a high-paying position in a state institution, if they can't sustain their fathers' companies, and if they don't have any financial gain, they will deny all these places you've mentioned. Or at least they're saying, "maybe this can happen but sure it won't be possible the way my father has done it so far," and drifting to other places. They don't reject their fathers' asserted understanding of Islam and go in pursuit of questions like, "what's this true religion?" Those paths are cut off completely for them. Young people brought up in normal families may question such things, but these people have such lines of questioning cut off for them. I've seen lots of people that took off their headscarves. They say that Ayşe Çavdar used to be one of them. This is a serious problem but the people that can put on their headscarf and speak at all kinds of circles with a radiance on their face, demonstrate their self-confidence, put forth a coherent logic, and influence the confidence of others with their own confidence are very few in number.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROTECTION OF THE CITIZENS AND DUY-DER EXPERIENCE: THE ISSUE OF MINES AND WAR REMNANTS IN TURKEY

Özlem Öztürk

As the Social Awareness and Anti-Violence Association (DUY-DER), we started to work on mines and remnants of war in 2008. Before that, I was working on gender issues and violence against women for about ten years. I'm actually a maths teacher. I was always interested in mines because when I was working in Mardin and Şırnak I had students who were harmed by them - children now with no arms, legs or fingers. When I heard the stories of these children, I started to think about what we could do to prevent these incidents. When I asked the children questions like "If you knew what these items were, if you were told about them, if you knew about these areas would you still go and play there?" and they replied "No we wouldn't," so I and a couple of friends started to think about solutions. We discussed what we could do and started to work in 2006. In 2008, we founded the association and carried out our work with a higher focus on the fieldwork.

I would like to share my experience on what we have done later. Because I think the mine issue is not defined and perceived correctly in Turkey. The mine issue comes up as a security issue in public opinion, especially in national media. Or it comes up in discussions about unutilized fertile fields. These discussions that exclude the part that violates the right to live, which is a basic human right, aren't discussions that tell and define what the issue means to people and the damages the issue causes. That's why it seems like I will talk a lot during today's presentation but I think we will have a more productive session if we share our views and experiences as much as possible.

I prepared my presentation in this format. First let's look at the mine problem around the world. What is happening around the world regarding this subject? What kind of international conventions are there about the issue? How binding are these conventions to the states that signed them? Which states are producing mines and which ones ceased to produce? We will give a summary answering these questions and then talk about Turkey by discuss-

ing: “To what extent does the mine issue occur in Turkey? How does it affect us and what can we do as NGOs to solve this problem?”

Firstly, I would like to start with the definition of the mine that often comes up as “anti-personnel landmine.” Anti-personnel landmines are defined as: “Mines that are designed to blow up with the contact or approach of a person or a being, that will overpower, wound or kill one person or more.” Explosive remnants of war are ammunition that have not been used, fired, or exploded. Hand grenades, howitzers, rockets and bullets that we call ammunition clusters are in this war remnants group.

These are equipment manufactured in many forms from heel-breakers to anti-tank mines. They are weapons that are preferred by both governments and non-state armed organisations. I want to say that explosive remnants of war, especially mines are very dangerous because these are very unstable equipments. They cause way more destruction than the destruction caused by landmines. For example, let's say a simple howitzer's fatality area is 300 meters whereas all living creatures within a thousand meter area can be harmed when a big bomb explodes. And landmines are known to be very sneaky weapons. There are a lot of features that distinguish landmines from traditional weapons; mines are very cheap weapons that have a lifespan of 75 to 100 years. You may not find a mine that you planted today when you check the exact location tomorrow because it is planted in the soil and soil is a living organism. It is also affected by climate. Mines may relocate when soil moves during landslides or floods. This increases the danger.

The victim himself activates the landmine. Mines wait for the person or the living being that will contact them where they are buried. As a result of the contact of the living being they blow up and cause injury or death. A third option doesn't exist. Since the mines are weapons that violate the right to live which is the most basic human right, the right to travel, economic and social rights, environmental and animal rights and peace rights, we always defended that the mine issue is not a security issue but a human rights issue and we tried to plan our work according to this perspective. We tried to form such a public opinion and raise awareness in Turkey. As it is with most issues I believe that correct analyses and resolutions won't be made unless a holistic approach is implemented. The mine issue is an issue as such. Since it is an issue that includes women issues, environmental issues, child rights, economic rights and ecological balance, I believe that this issue should be reviewed with a holistic approach and from a human rights perspective, and the resolutions should be made accordingly.

What is the mine issue in the world? I want to talk about this a bit. I think there are 193 countries that are recognized by the United Nations. There are more than a hundred million landmines in 64 of these countries. Founded and led by an NGO in the 1990s, The International Campaign to Ban Landmines won the Nobel Prize. It was a very important campaign supported by many institutions around the world that worked on mines and human rights issues. After the success of the campaign the Nobel Peace Prize, it resulted in the formation of the Ottawa Treaty that binds states in this manner.

The Ottawa Treaty is an international treaty prepared by the United Nations, just like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the Declaration of Children's Rights. Ottawa Treaty is an important treaty in this regard, a contract that requires contracting states to clear mine stockpiles within four years and mines within their borders within ten years. It is also very important in that it is a treaty prohibiting the production, transfer, sale, re-acquisition, storage and retention of mines. States parties undertake to clear all mines at their borders when they sign this treaty.

164 states are parties to the treaty that bans mines. Turkey signed the treaty in 2003 and the agreement came into effect for Turkey in 2004. Since it came into effect in 2004, Turkey had to clear all mines within its borders by 2014, but it did not do so. As a party to the Ottawa Treaty, Turkey needed to present a report to the United Nations explaining how many mines they cleared, how many mines were left and why. And of course, what was the reason? Security issue. Turkey argued that they didn't clear the mines because "there is a terrorism issue in Turkey. That's why I have to ensure my safety." They requested an additional ten years from the United Nations. The United Nations gave Turkey an additional eight years and according to the current situation Turkey is under the obligation of clearing all the mines within its borders and stockpiles by 2022. There are three years left till 2022. No work has been done. In 2014, a minor clearing took place in some areas. When we discuss the issue of mines in Turkey, I will try to explain it more thoroughly.

I want to point out that America and Iraq are not parties to the Ottawa Treaty. The Pentagon did not sign the convention because it stated that it always wanted to retain the right to use landmines. India, Pakistan, Russia, Burma and China are among the countries that have not signed the convention. Countries that haven't signed are usually among the countries that produce

mines. Thirteen countries are producing anti-personnel landmines. South Korea, North Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, America, Vietnam, Cuba, India, Iran, Burma and China are among these countries. The Ottawa Treaty has a significant impact, and of course I think that the efforts of organizations working on the mine problem in the world is also very effective. Forty-nine countries have announced cessation of mine production, and this number is increasing. This is very important. America is one of these countries; they said they would stop manufacturing mines. Israel and Nepal are also among these countries, but in the reports published on Israel, we still encounter criticisms that production continues.

While this is the case with the states around the world, there are very important organizations dealing with the mine problem. I would also like to mention these organizations. Because I find it important in terms of broadening the horizons for what kind of studies can be done. The UN recognizes the work done by these organizations and the reports they annually publish. The UN receives reports every year from countries that are parties to the Ottawa Treaty and according to the reports published by these organizations, it has the chance to evaluate those states. Since the work of these organizations and the reports they publish are important, I would like to give you some information on these organizations.

There is an organization called the Geneva Call. It is a Switzerland-based organization that aims for non-state armed groups to comply with humanitarian principles and to protect civilians in a state of war and conflict. They work on preventing sexual abuse, banning mines, preventing child soldiers and protecting civilians during war. The Geneva Call has a very important feature: They sign agreements with non-state armed organizations on these issues. "You are an armed organisation. You will not use child soldiers in battles, you will not sexually abuse, you will not use mines." Geneva Call is also recognized by the UN. In fact, in 2006, a situation about us developed regarding the disuse of landmines. They signed a contract with PKK in 2006 on the disuse of landmines and in 2013 on child soldiers. The Geneva Call regularly audits all organizations that signed contracts every year and reports on compliance with the provisions of this treaty.

Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor is another important organisation. They regularly publish important reports on the state parties every year and present these reports to the world. It is an organisation recognized by the UN. They are making evaluations about whether state parties fulfill the requirements of the Ottawa Treaty. They collect data on deaths and injuries caused by

mines and remnants of war in the countries they are investigating, and each report they publish gives important information on the extent of that country's mine problem. They have a project called the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. This campaign was launched in 1998 and is still ongoing.

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is a non-governmental organization aiming for a secure future for individuals affected by armed conflict and violence. Their main area of work is mines and they work in forty countries. They do a lot of work, from mine risk training to forming public opinion, raising awareness and mine clearance. In their field, they especially reach inaccessible small, poor communities and enable those communities and groups of people to create safe living spaces. For a very long time, they have been implementing all this work in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The HALO Trust is a London based organization. It appears in the press from time to time. It is one of the organisations that Lady Diana helped found. Their main field is demining and rebuilding these cleared areas and villages. They clear the mined areas and at the same time, they try to rebuild a community by discussing with the locals how the demined area can be used again depending on its features, whether it can be used for agriculture or to build living spaces.

Survivor Corps is an initiative and a networking effort that provides a network for war survivors. It is one of the organizations that guided the campaign that led to the formation of the Ottawa Treaty. This is a US based organization.

This is how I can summarize the state of the countries, the extent of the mine problem in the world and what kind of work has been done. Do you want to share anything or ask any questions before I move on to the mine problem in Turkey?

Participant: *Can the states that do not comply with the Ottawa Treaty be sanctioned?*

These international conventions are binding contracts but they don't have the power to sanction. Lawyers know this much better, but at the end, the UN is a community of states, and other large structures have the same problem. The emergence of a contract like the Ottawa Treaty is an important reference point for us. While evaluating and criticizing this problem, we need to refer to something. When we are criticizing Turkey and coming up with resolutions we ground them on the Ottawa Treaty. This treaty enables us to say, "They

made the following commitments but didn't fulfill them; they should have completed these tasks till this date." The treaty can't sanction the states but it binds them significantly. The UN generally gives recommendations to states. "You have committed to this, you must fulfill this commitment."

I still think it is very important and effective; because there really is nothing else to hold on to in this system. How will we criticize? If we have these conventions at the moment, we need to use them and we can create pressure using them. I think we can shape public opinion accordingly.

Sanctions may be as follows. There are many different relationships between states. Sanctions may come up in these relationships. They may come up in commercial agreements. Consequently Turkey not being able to fulfill their commitments regarding the mine issue might mean that it is an unsafe country. This situation may affect commercial, economic agreements, etc. It can affect a lot of things. Its binding on states is important in this sense, because it affects other relationships. In addition, damage to the prestige and credibility of a country in the international arena is also important among states.

Participant: *May citizens wounded by mines claim rights in countries that have signed this convention?*

They may in this way: In every country, citizens may seek their rights within the provisions of law. As you know in Turkey you have a right to apply to ECHR after you apply to municipal law and it yields no result. The mine issue in Turkey is like this. For instance, we did a study in 2006, in Hakkari. We talked to a person who had lost his leg due to a mine explosion. He said that he filed a lawsuit for compensation and was penalized after the lawsuit. When I asked him why he was penalized he answered, "for damaging state property." It is possible to encounter such absurd scenes in Turkey.

Participant: *Since the Ottawa Treaty is a UN convention, I guess it is not possible to make an individual application right now, but of course, oncoming processes may pave the way for individual applications. If Turkey does not clear these mines until 2022, it will be announced to the public that it is not an isolated event, it is an event that has continuous effects and the state won't be able to present an objective and reasonable motive when a mine related problem occurs and ECHR is contacted. Because ECHR will state: "You are a party to this convention and you have not fulfilled your obligations. Therefore, these theories you put forward are not accepted." It*

will provide the opportunity to say that. It may also have such an effect on individual applications. In addition, the UN has a general convention called Civil Conventions. There, too, an application can be made to the Human Rights Committee and an effective result can be obtained here. It may affect Turkey indirectly. Frankly I'm surprised to hear that Turkey has signed such a convention. The political conjuncture of that period may also have been effective in it.

It is one of the countries that signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Participant: *AKP government signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as soon as they were elected. Even the Right of Self-Determination is in the covenant.*

They put reservations on some of the clauses of the Declaration of Human Rights. They also put reservations on some clauses in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

How does the issue of mines and remnants of war manifest itself in Turkey? Let's start looking at that. The tables below show the scale of the problem.

Table 1: The Mines Konwn In The Borders

Border	The Number of Mines	Mining Date	The Number of The Lands	The Size of The Land
Armenia				
Ardahan	9724	1994	15	597.225
Iğdır	132	1994	6	32.000
Kars	10.578	1993	22	662.285
Azerbaijan Border				
Iğdır	2.994	1997	1	85.800
Ağrı	113.294	1993-1998	122	6.797.790
Iran Border				
Hakkari	11.625	1990-1993	239	1.180.000
Iğdır	41.151	1993-1996	13	3.359.380
Van	32.504	1990-1993	133	2.984.640
Iraq Border				
Hakkari	15.223	1990-1998	316	1.526.130
Şırnak	53.823	1990-1993	399	4.391.399
Syria Border				
Gaziantep	218.891	1955-1960	681	55.200.000
Hatay	41.676	1955-1960/1993-1997	191	23.700.000
Mardin	164.387	1955-1960/1993-1997	231	54.000.000
Şanlıurfa	190.495	1955-1960	168	57.600.000
TOTAL	906.497		2.537	212.116.659

The Table is created according to Turkey Mine Ban Treaty 12th meeting of States Parties request for extension of presidential office history report (29 March 2013).

These are the areas where the minefields are located in Turkey. We did not create this data ourselves. These are actual figures taken from reports the state presented and the reports submitted to the UN, prepared by the Mine Watch Committee. When did mine-planting start in Turkey? In the 1950s, when Adnan Menderes was the Prime Minister, mines were planted on the Syrian

border, starting from the borders of Hatay and Gaziantep, in order to prevent illegal border crossings, illegal trade and actions defined as “smuggling.”

There is also a table showing the size of the lands, the number of mines in each land and their laying dates, in each province.

Mine laying started in Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Mardin and Hatay in 1955 and continued until 1997. There are mines in all of Turkey’s land borders. Borders of Georgia, Armenia, Iran, Iraq and Syria are completely protected by landmines. Turkey’s statement of using mines to ensure border control is developed this way. But when we look at the table, we see that there are also mines laid in residential areas in the inner regions. Siirt, Bitlis, Batman, Diyarbakır, Bingöl and Tunceli are among provinces with minefields even though they are not on the border.

Table 2: Mine Lands

Region (City)	The Number of Mines	Mining Date	The Number of The Lands	The Size of The Land
Batman	284	1993-1994	15	11.000
Bitlis	853	1993-1997	75	455.000
Siirt	1416	1991-1993	36	125.000
Bingöl	2387	1994-1997	59	275.000
Diyarbakır	3636	1993-1997	38	75.700
Kars	10.578	1993	22	662.285
Ardahan	12.004	1993	19	1.035.225
Tunceli	12.189	1993-1995	156	700.000
Van	32.614	1991-1993	143	3.038.140
Hatay	41.676	1955-1997	191	23.200.000
Iğdır	44.277	1994-1996	20	3.472.190
Hakkari	74.502	1991-1998	809	2.730.125
Ağrı	113.294	1993-1998	122	6.797.730
Mardin	166.960	195-1997	247	54.090.000
Şanlıurfa	190.495	1955-1960	168	57.800.000
Gaziantep	218.891	1955-1960	681	55.200.000
Şırnak	77.887	1991-1998	719	4.754.882
TOTAL	1.003.943		3.520	214.737.307

The Table is created according to Turkey Mine Ban Treaty 12th meeting of States Parties request for extension of presidential office history report (29 March 2013).

Participant: *In which part of the cities are the mines? Or where is the area where mines are laid in Diyarbakır?*

I will talk about that too. This is the biggest problem. We know about the borders. The borders are already safest because wire fences surround them, everyone knows where the minefields are. But where are the mines in the city?

Participant: *What is the purpose? What's the sensitivity there?*

Let me talk about that too. The mines in the inner regions of the borders are already very dangerous for civilians and citizens because we do not know where they are laid. So how can we know and speculate? Unfortunately, we can form opinions with the explosions that take place. A living thing needs to be harmed, a person killed or injured so that we can understand which areas are minefields. Of course, non-governmental organizations and people who are interested in these issues implement research. For instance, where are the mines laid in Diyarbakır? - The areas surrounding the evacuated villages.

We just mentioned that the mine issue involves many problems. When a mine explodes, it deforms the structure of the soil. It spoils the soil with the chemicals it spreads. It may cause air pollution with the smoke and chemicals it emits into the air and may cause environmental pollution. Not only humans make contact with mines but also animals. Mines don't discriminate on their victims; they cause the animals to perish. For example, in the 1990s, many animals perished in the Kurdistan region, which we call Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, where there is a high population of Kurds.

After 1980, the Kurdish problem becomes a part of the mine problem in Turkey. After the 1980's, especially during the 1990's, mines were laid in the regions where Kurdish people reside heavily and where there is intense conflict. Remember you asked what sensitivity there was, the sensitivity is this; the Kurdish question. I believe these dates are essential to understand the extent of the mine problem better. Landmines and Cluster Munitions Monitor has published a very important report on Turkey in 1999. The report mentioned that in Turkey, mines are used both by state forces and non-state armed actors. Also, in official Turkish records, it is stated that the Turkish state placed 936,663 mines - almost one million - on its borders between 1957 and 1998. There are around three million mines in Turkish storehouses that need to be destroyed. For example, the city of Dersim, which we now call Tunceli, is nowhere close to the border. However, even if it is really far away from the border, it is reported that there are 10,557 mines in Dersim. The number of mines is expected to be

around 12,000 today. For instance, in 2010, 97 civilians lost their lives during explosions caused by mines and remnants of war. 26 of them were children and 41 of them were adult civilians. 19 of those children died while playing with mines. Kurdish children, when they play with mines and remnants of war innocently thinking they are toys, either lose parts of their bodies or their lives. If I remember correctly, in 2006 - was it Doğan Güneş? - the Chief of Defense had made a disastrous statement in a press conference; "We lost our mine map!"

When we arrive at the 2000's, there is the peace process that started in 2013. I have always thought it was an important process and strongly believe that we urgently need to get back to that process, of course in a better planned and genuine manner. With the suspension of the peace process, the conflict in the region restarted. We all know what the situation in Sur, Cizre, Şırnak, Nusaybin and Silopi is like as the clashes in the city resurfaced. Many neighborhoods were destroyed; intense clashes took place. Thousands of people had to emigrate. Why am I reminding you of this? - Because remnants of war in these areas were not collected afterwards. After the clashes ended in Cizre and Nusaybin, many objects children found and collected to sell or to play with exploded resulting in the death of many children.

According to the 2017 report, in Turkey 42 people were harmed by mines and remnants of war, 23 of them were children. This means that almost half of harmed people were children who are generally 7 to 14 year olds.

I would also like to show you the mines around the borders. It is said to have started in 1955. All the land borders with Syria, Iraq, Iran, Azerbaijan and Armenia are covered with mines and there are around 906,497 mines on these borders. We had mentioned that there are around one million mines. The remaining 100,000 mines are in the inner regions of the borders. I mentioned the Ottawa Treaty. What should be done about this? The only way to get rid of this problem for good is to demine these areas. Yet, we are talking about a vast number of mines and a really large area. We are talking about a problem that comprises many others, especially the Kurdish problem, which is also one of the factors why the state delays solving the mine problem.

Are we going to close our eyes on people dying as we wait for the mines to be cleared? Of course not, there are so many things to be done until the mines are cleared. The Ottawa Treaty lays out a lot of obligations on the Turkish state. We can try and pressure the state to fulfill these obligations. There are also other things to be done by nongovernmental organizations and sensible individuals.

After explaining what Turkey has done, and before getting into the question of “What can we do?” I would like to mention a few things. After the Ottawa Treaty was signed, Mine Action Center was established within the Defense Ministry in 2015. Even regulations that defined various tasks such as creating action plans for mines, their enforcement, standards on mine clearing, taking remedial measures for people harmed by mines, setting out an information management system and informing the public were drafted at this center. Even though this center was established, it hasn’t done any work yet.

What else happened in Turkey? A bill titled Mine Bill was introduced. However, it has nothing to do with mines. This bill is only consisted of regulations on clearing of the area that is 600 km around the Syrian border, which was the most heavily mined area in Turkey. It was mentioned quite a lot in the media. It came up in discussions on whether the fertile soil around the Syrian border was being transferred to Israeli companies. It involves no regulations on mine victims; it does not even mention them. The mines around Iranian, Iraqi and Armenian borders are not within the scope of this bill. It only consists of regulations on how to clear the mines on the Syrian border. In the 2000’s, only a small portion of the mines in the Syrian border were cleared and the clearance process came to a halt due to the Syrian war and the rising conflict in the area.

Table 3: Mines Known Around Military Facilities

Region (City)	The Number of The Mines	The Date of The Mining	The Size of The Land
Batman	284	1993-1994	15
Siirt	1476	1991-1993	36
Bingöl	853	1993-1997	59
Diyarbakır	3636	1993-1997	38
Ardahan	2280	1993	4
Tunceli	12.189	1993-1995	156
Van	110	Bilinmiyor	5
Hakkari	47.654	Bilinmiyor	71
Mardin	2.573	1993-1994	16
Şırnak	24.064	Bilinmiyor	162
TOPLAM	97.446		637

The Table is created according to Turkey Mine Ban Treaty 12th meeting of States Parties request for extension of presidential office history report (29 March 2013).

There is a table above explaining the relationship between mines and the Kurdish problem. Mines were also planted in the land around military facilities in our region. No police or military facility has mines planted around in any region of Turkey except the ones you see on this table. Diyarbakir, Batman, Siirt, Mardin, Tunceli, Bingöl, Bitlis, Ardahan, Hakkari, Şırnak and Van; the regions where there is intense conflict.

Participant: *Are mines also planted around facilities in urban areas?*

Yes, for instance in Hakkari and Şırnak.

Participant: *Are there any mines planted around Bağlar Police Station in Diyarbakir city center?*

No, there aren't mines near Diyarbakır Bağlar Police Station, but there are mines around military facilities in rural areas. The table shows us that. For instance, in Hakkari and Şırnak, police stations are generally located on hills. There are mines surrounding the military facilities there. Not to mention that due to the high frequency of landslides in that area, especially with snow, the mines slide down from the hills.

Participant: *The 2013 Peace Process was simultaneously a time where the state heavily engaged in building new 'kale-kol's. Do you know if the vicinity of these new police stations is also covered with mines? Do you have any information on this?*

Kale-kol's are structures that are built underground. I have seen them in Şırnak and Hakkari. Only a small part of the building is above the ground; the majority of it is below. Not all police stations were turned into kale-kol's. I am not sure whether there are mines around them or not, but I don't think there are. Since it's mostly an underground structure, it may have a different defense mechanism. But most of the other police stations have mines around them. There are 97,000 mines around these police stations and military facilities.

Participant: *You mentioned that mine clearance is expensive. It is cheap as a weapon but it is expensive to demine. Who pays for the demining expenses? Is it the UN or the states? Or is the money coming from the organisations you mentioned before? Whose responsibility is it? I am also curious about another issue. Even if it wasn't done until today, could the clearance of the mines in the Kurdish region lead to build trust between the Kurdish armed*

forces and the state for peace formation? Was this method used in other countries? At least demining parts of Diyarbakir and Van.

The organizations that I recently mentioned are nongovernmental organisations that could be funded by the United Nations. Demining is a really expensive process that requires expertise; it is very important to figure out which clearing method should be used. There are various models tested around the world that don't ruin the soil structure.

First, states need to create action plans detailing how the clearing will take place. Each state is responsible for the mines within its borders. This was a desired effect of the Mine Bill. The state took a step to create regulations that dealt with questions such as; "How are we going to do the mine clearing? Should we assign it to private companies or manage it within the Ministry of Defense with our own means?" It is now on states' shoulders to find the right ways to do the clearing. International treaties could of course provide some opportunities, but the responsibility is on the states. They are responsible for covering the expenses of demining.

Participant: *There are many countries that have fully cleared their mines, right?*

Of course. European countries finished this task right after the Second World War. They let go of fighting against each other. They formed a mechanism to support each other by establishing what started out as European Economic Community and then became the European Union. It is also happening a lot in the countries we recently mentioned. For instance, there was a significant demining in Afghanistan. Lastly Mozambique had declared that they fully cleared all the mines in their country.

In response to your second question, this would be a great approach. We also tried to emphasize it in our reports, especially during the peace process. During the two-year period, even though there were no deaths caused by clashes, Kurdish children continued to die; because mines are weapons that cannot take the peace process into account due to their characteristics we mentioned before. Mine clearance is of course very important in terms of trust building and making people feel safe, and it is a model that is widely applied in other countries around the world.

I would like to emphasize that I am not making this information up. It is all written in the official government records. Within a three-year period during 1989-1992, the state declared that it planted 39 thousand mines around

security facilities in the East and Southeast for security purposes. In a similar vein, mines were laid around many villages that were evacuated as a result of forced migration in the 1990s. In 2000's "Returning to the Village Bill" was introduced. Regulations were adopted regarding villagers to return to their homes. A lot of people couldn't go back to their villages because of these mines. I will mention official government statistics again. According to the Turkish Parliament Human Rights Committee's report in 1994, 905 villages and 2,523 hamlets were evacuated. Around one and a half to three million people were forced to emigrate. 3,428 settlements is a very significant number. It covers a vast area and tells us that majority of these areas are covered with mines.

Last month, an event took place in Dersim. Two children lost their lives. Those children had gone to the meadows with their families. How far could they have moved away from the tent they lived in? They hadn't gone away too far when they encountered a war remnant. After they poked it, they both lost their lives. We know that a lot of areas used for grazing are covered with mines. Having perished animals in an area means there are mines in that area. There are also areas that are declared 'security zones' from time to time. On the news, we see statements like; "It is prohibited to enter these areas for 15 days." These areas also present great danger in terms of mines and remnants of war. Looking at the numbers and dates we mentioned, it seems as if mine planting has ended after the 1990's, but personally, I do not believe that. I believe the mine planting process is still going on.

We have said that the biggest problem and the possible route for solution is mine clearance. Some areas in the inner regions were demined but since there are around 100 thousand mines in these regions, we can say that only a very small portion was cleared. 128 in the Armenian border, 3,800 in the Iranian border, 16 in the Iraqi border, 340 in the Syrian border, 19 in Hakkari, and 330 in Mardin and Şanlıurfa were cleared. In total, it seems like 25 thousand mines were cleared.

Table 4: Cleared Mines

Region (City)	The Number of The Mines	The Date of The Mining	The Size of The Land
<i>Hinterland</i>			
Batman	182	-	11.000
Siirt	172	-	125.000
Bingöl	2111	-	275.000
Diyarbakır	2879	-	75.700
Ardahan	1893	-	438.000
Tunceli	5170	-	710.000
Hakkari	1977	-	48.500
Mardin	1661	-	23.985
Şırnak	3936	-	90.000
<i>Armenia Border</i>			
Kars	128	-	363.463
<i>Iran Border</i>			
Ağrı	3800	-	2.615.648
Hakkari	19	-	
<i>Iraq Border</i>			
Şırnak	16	-	-
<i>Syria Border</i>			
Gaziantep	430	3	872.622
Mardin	330	2	270.500
Şanlıurfa	-	1	7.175

The Table is created according to Turkey Mine Ban Treaty 12th meeting of States Parties request for extension of presidential office history report (29 March 2013).

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *You mentioned deaths of civilians and children, which we also know about. Is there anything at this point that civilians can do to protect themselves? I remember that scene from the film “Hükümet Kadın” where they release the donkey. Do people really have such practices? Because there are people engaged in smuggling. You may have encountered them. What do they do to protect themselves?*

Unfortunately, animals are used. Horses and donkeys are sometimes sent ahead and people follow the routes they take as a way of protecting themselves. But what we call ‘smuggling’, I’m not sure how to describe it, is how people make money in order to survive. They know where the minefields are. They are engaged in that activity on the borders. There are various methods like this that they have developed. The main problem is about the civilians living in the inner regions of the borders. There, the only way to tell whether there are mines in an area is by looking at the previous explosions. You gain experience through devastating consequences. You don’t know how much of the area is covered with mines, the number of mines or where exactly those mines are. Since your life and security rests solely on luck at that point, it is a major human rights issue. It also encompasses other issues such as the violation of animal rights and environmental problems as I mentioned before.

There are some other methods. We use these in our work as well. People living in these regions know this. A bump, excavated soil, dead animals; these all signal that there may be a mine at that spot. Also, if there is a wire, a piece of metal coming out of the soil, people know that it could be a part of a bomb. Colored rocks on top of each other could be another sign. Pieces of metal hanging on trees, ropes and wires between weeds could belong to booby traps. A string of objects that look like coins and rings on the surface of the soil could belong to bombs. What should be done? It is essential to constantly check where you step on. But to be honest I don’t know if it’s possible to pay that much attention to it in your daily life.

Participant: *Is it possible to determine whom the war remnants belong to? Because in order to evade responsibility the state could easily say, “I haven’t laid these mines. The armed groups that I’m fighting against laid these. We’re fighting against terrorism and it has its own challenges.” Are there any differences between mines that were planted by the state and other groups?*

The state has always said that and will continue to say it. Two children lost their lives during the last incident in Dersim. It was said that they died due to the mines “planted by the terrorist organization” even though it wasn’t a mine related incident. It was an event that occurred as a result of the explosion of previously unexploded ammunition. The fact that it was a mine laid by the organization or an explosive device belonging to the organization doesn’t make the problem more innocent or doesn’t justify the problem. Frankly, I think entering into such a discussion will distract us from the main addressee and theme of the problem. I do not care about who planted the mine. It doesn’t change the fact that mines harm us. Human rights are at stake here. My interlocutor is the state and the state has to ensure the safety of its citizens. If there is a conflict in this country, if mines are being laid, it is due to the anti-democratic approach of the state towards the solution of the problems in this country and not developing the correct methods to solve the problem. This is the state’s problem and the state must solve it.

If we get into a vicious argument like, “This is the mine the organization has laid, this is the mine the state has laid,” we would get sidetracked and miss the rights violation aspect. Neither the state nor the armed groups should use mines; it is illegal to use mines. By doing that we would be providing opportunities to the responsible party to prevent them from fulfilling their responsibilities. It’s impossible to determine who the mine belongs to but it is sometimes possible for weapons.

Participant: *Ultimately, the state can create an international public opinion to reduce the pressure on them by saying, “I haven’t done it, I’m fighting against it,” and so on.*

I don’t think it does because ultimately, the state has signed the Ottawa Treaty. First you need to fulfill your own obligations. Even if armed groups laid these mines, the state is responsible for clearing them. We can’t know who laid them and that isn’t our problem either. Our problems are where these minefields are located, what type of damage they cause to civilians and what measures should be taken to prevent it. So, for me, the focus should be on how to solve this problem.

Participant: *Isn’t it also important from this aspect? The states are regulated through the Ottawa Treaty or at least that’s the aim. But there is another organization called Geneva Call and they work towards preventing armed groups from engaging in mine planting. This shows us that there is another aspect to this. It is necessary to work on preventing organizations from lay-*

ing mines. I'm thinking out loud: the State probably has a map determining in which cities and villages the mines are located. We know that there is a tradition of archiving since the times of the Ottoman Empire. Records probably exist for these as well. I wonder whether the armed group also has mine maps for the mines they laid. Do they know the locations of the mines they planted in villages and do they keep records of them? There is an advocacy issue here. It is the state that is responsible for clearing the mines. On the other hand, if the armed group is continuing to plant mines as the conflict proceeds even though they signed an agreement - I hope they're not but I'm imagining the worst-case scenario - let's say the armed group signed the agreement but continues to plant mines and doesn't keep records, the state has means, its institutions etc. An illegal organization on the other hand, which is hiding in the mountains, probably does not have skills such as archiving, coding or mapping. Let's say that the organisation planted mines in a region of Dersim and didn't keep any records. This means the state can't clear these mines even if they wanted to because they have no information on the mines. We are talking about a million of them. 90-95% of the mines were most probably laid by the state but I got the idea that the rest is not fully determined. We have to be informed on this. If these mines exist, where are they? We don't know if the armed group has information on this either. They probably don't.

In 2006, they said they had records. After entering into the agreement in Geneva, they stated that: "The maps exist and if the Turkish state declares their mine map we will declare ours as well." But I do not know whether they continue to plant mines or not. In this respect, unfortunately there is no situation we can deal with but it is important of course. We actually emphasize this when we say mines are used by the states and other armed groups. We emphasize that they are a type of weapon that shouldn't be used, that they are harmful to civilians. Unfortunately, they are used. It was then when we heard there was such a map; it was said to be made public. However Turkish state didn't recognize this agreement and objected by saying; "This agreement was signed without our knowledge, how dare you enter into an agreement with a terrorist organization!"

Participant: *In French and German laws, there is an interesting regulation on the compensation of damages caused by terrorism. They say; "It's not our responsibility." Turkey is the only country that does the opposite. However, it costs very little to the Turkish state and has a minor effect. The responsibility increases vastly after it is figured that the mine belongs to the state. Otherwise of course the government has the responsibility to protect its*

citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms. But when the mine is owned by the state, the responsibility increases. Therefore, I was asking whether it is possible to determine whose mine it is as it has a larger effect in terms of law and advocating.

When all these aspects are taken into consideration, mines are a problem that encompasses a lot of other areas. Yet, for me, the solution is not that hard. It is an issue that could be under control. For instance, I'm going to talk about very basic measures: warning signs.

These signs are very low cost. A sign that says "Mine Field," "Danger Zone" or a skull sign; these signs are well known by Kurdish people. It is possible to see them on the borders. They mean the borders are dangerous and have mines. If these signs are put around the minefields in the inner regions, they may act as a warning measure and prevent people from entering into those areas in the first place.

What else can be done and what is being done on this issue in Turkey? No studies were carried out on mapping, marking or warning, especially for mined areas. Only non-governmental organizations are trying to do it within their own means. Informing people living in the inner regions of the borders about the minefields, marking the areas where mines are located, placing warning signs, engaging in education efforts are very important measures that could prevent people from getting damaged by mines. Children usually take these objects they find and take them home. There are many incidents where an explosion occurred while the child was playing with the object at home. People are taking out the explosive substance inside these objects. They want to use that gunpowder while fishing, especially in Hakkari. Explosions occur for this reason too. Such cases have happened a lot.

A data analysis on the damages caused by mines and remnants of war does not exist either. It should be done immediately.

We talked about legal regulations. There is the Ottawa Treaty and the Mine Bill. There is the Mine Action Center founded under the Ottawa Treaty. However, there is no legislation concerning mine victims. It should be introduced as soon as possible.

There aren't any efforts towards creating a rehabilitation plan to reintroduce mine victims into the society. There are no specific practices regarding the needs and rights of these people either.

Furthermore, even if using mines is prohibited by the Ottawa Treaty, Turkish legislation does not include any regulations criminalizing the use of mines. We believe a potential bill for mine victims should also include clauses criminalizing mine use. A major step would be to re-evaluate the existing Mine Bill or pass new bills to make them fully comply with the Ottawa Treaty.

Turkey primarily needs to make a declaration about when it is going to destroy all the remaining mines in stockpiles. They also need to share with us their demining plan and the mine maps. Especially the local community and the children in the area need to be informed on this subject.

So then, what have we done regarding this issue? Since 2008, as DUY-DER, we have determined our primary field of work on mines and remnants of war. We have engaged in awareness-raising activities on recognizing the mine problem as a human rights issue rather than a safety issue and establishing local and national policies in this regard. We especially concentrated on field work. There was a need for a program to educate people on the risks arising from mines and we developed a project called "Mine Risk Training". More than hundred thousand children participated.

How have we started doing this work? Before establishing the foundation, as a group of volunteers, we engaged in a mine research covering the city of Hakkari in order to find answers to questions such as; "What is the extent of the mine problem in Turkey? What are people's needs and in what ways are they getting harmed?" We met with 1058 individuals. They were people affected by the mines and looking at the problems these people faced and how their encounters with mines took place, we decided there was a need for a training program on mine related risks especially in regions where the mine issue is present. Since 2008 we have been working with children aged 7-14 warning them about mines.

How do we do this training? We especially try to do it in public schools. The reason why we prefer these schools is the fact that we know it is the state who is ultimately responsible and also that these schools have the highest number of children attending. Training in schools was the only way to reach this many children, so we preferred that. Another reason is that we need to get official permission from public authorities to do such training in public schools. There is no way we can go to these schools without getting any permits and say; "We are here to train students." We need to meet with governors, mayors, directorates of national education and school administrations. We put a lot of importance on these meetings as well because during these meetings, we

speak about the mine problem that we are discussing here today with them as well. Therefore, these meetings also act as awareness-raising activities. After getting the permits, we go to all the schools in each village. There are some schools with only ten students, we even visit them and provide information to children. We have some visuals, we show them films and hang posters on school walls, cafes in the villages and try to warn everyone.

We have a magazine titled Hızır Dede. There are caricatures in this magazine. However, explosives and mines are depicted in real photos because the children thinking they are toys is a major problem. If we were to depict these in a “cute” way, the idea that they are toys could be reinforced. Therefore, we use real pictures of mines and explosives. By using warning slogans and informative texts we try to educate children so that they do not fall prey to their innocent curiosities.

What do we do? For instance, which regions could be mined? In what kind of situations you shouldn't get close to certain areas? We try to explain to children that they should stay away from excavated soils, bumps, areas where there are dead animals by using visuals. We tell them that if they get lost, they should try to find their way back by tracing their footprints, if they see an object on the ground they shouldn't touch it; don't get close to it, throw a rock at it or try to burn it.

We attach great importance to the participation of school teachers in our trainings. Because teachers are always with the children and they serve for many years. It is very important that they know how to behave when they are in a risk zone. That's why we especially care about teachers' participation in these trainings.

We publish reports after every training that explains our data and findings. We also engage in research projects sporadically. For instance, we implemented a research in Cizre in 2012. We have been working since 2008. In order to understand if the situation is getting better or worse; we implement research projects in every 4-5 years.

Below you can see our research in 2012 on Cizre:

Table 5: Dates of mine explosions

Year	Number of cases	(%)	Year	Number of cases	(%)
-	4	0,8	1998	7	1,4
1976	1	0,2	1999	12	2,5
1982	2	0,4	2000	16	3,3
1985	2	0,4	2001	3	0,6
1987	2	0,4	2002	7	1,4
1988	8	1,7	2003	3	0,6
1989	68	14,1	2004	8	1,7
1990	31	6,4	2005	2	0,4
1991	19	3,9	2006	5	1
1992	35	7,2	2007	6	1,2
1993	67	13,9	2008	6	1,2
1994	45	9,3	2009	20	4,1
1995	13	2,7	2010	21	4,3
1996	14	2,9	2011	18	3,7
1997	15	3,1	2012	23	4,8
Total				483	100

When we look at the dates of the incidents we see that there is an increase after the 1990's, a decrease in the 2000's yet another increase after 2009. During times of conflict and violence, the rate of mine explosions also increases.

For example, if we take a look at where the mine explosions take place, “Rural Areas Around Villages” means the vicinity of villages. It means you aren’t far away from the village, it is just right outside of it. There have been 122 explosions that happened in village centers, right next to police stations. This proves our previous point on the issue of mine planting in the vicinity of police stations.

Table 6: Areas where mine explosions took place.

Location	Number of cases	Percentage (%)
Rural Areas Around Villages	224	46,4
Village Center	76	15,7
Cizre Center	27	5,6
Cizre Rural Areas	14	2,9
Near Village Police Station	122	25,3
Other	1	0,2
Subtotal	464	96,1
Unknown	19	3,9
Total	483	100

Table 7: How the events took place in mine explosions.

How the incident took place	Number of cases	Percentage (%)
Farming	19	3,9
Going to School	5	1,0
Going on Military Operation	45	9,3
Collecting Wood	51	10,6
Grazing	106	21,9
Excavating	9	1,9
Travelling	142	29,4
Playing Games	44	9,1
Having a Picnic	3	,6
Collecting Beets	12	2,5
At Home	40	8,3
Subtotal	476	98,6
Unknown	7	1,4
Total	483	100

When we look at how the incidents take place - which is also one of the most tragic parts - we see that people get harmed while engaging in their routine everyday activities. People were hurt while farming for instance. Did they plant mines in the fields they were farming? I don't think so, the mines probably got there through landslides. Children find mines on their way to school. Village rangers mostly experience the incidents that took place on the way to military operations. Incidents that happened while collecting wood and grazing are also really high. Some incidents in pastures around villages occur while excavating or travelling. These are the highest numbers. It is a really big problem that 44 people came in contact with mines and remnants of war while playing games. Since the people we talk to while getting this data and findings are the people who experienced the event, their suggestions are also very important to us. When asked; "What can be done?" at first, everyone mentions that the mines and explosives in the region should be cleared and the public needs to be informed.

Participant: *Have you or other NGOs conducted a mapping study where all cases are marked? There are a lot of cases at hand. We know the numbers but if we also marked them on a map, village by village...*

At the beginning of the 2000's, Human Rights Association did a study on that. We did such a mapping study for the Hakkari region when we were working on our research there. But a study with a bigger scope covering all the regions needs to be done. We need to locate all the cases and work from that.

Participant: *Do we have a database by case at hand?*

We don't have a collective database. We have one for Cizre and another one for Hakkari that we prepared in 2006. We are falling short in this matter; we focused more on fieldwork. Fieldwork is highly in depth and takes a lot of time. We have done fieldwork in Çukurca, Silopi, Nusaybin, Mardin, and Dersim. When we enter an area, we spend at least a year there. We move there, and as the project team, we visit all the villages. It takes a lot of time and is also costly. We are really experienced in fieldwork but I can honestly say that we fall short on this type of work.

Participant: *Memory Center has a map on losses. They require a lot of effort. They managed to get all the data and showed it on a map. Maybe we can start a similar project but we would need to go through all the records. Do you need to get permits from the Ministry of Education in order to visit these schools? How is their attitude? Are they trying to be helpful or are these difficult processes?*

Yes, we get permissions. If the officials are people from the region, if they are Kurdish, they understand us. However, if they are coming from the west, they are usually surprised. For instance, I had met with an official from the Ministry of Education in Şırnak. I believe he was from Adapazarı. He had listened to me with such bewilderment and said; "Is there such a problem in Şırnak? How is this even possible!?" I said let's walk on the streets and see how many bullets and explosives we can find. How is it not possible? In fact, an incident took place a week before. I said: "A child was injured, didn't you hear about that either?" When we come across these people we try to convince them by explaining them that the work we are doing is humanitarian. In such cases, the persuasion process can take too long. But if the official is from that region, then they are familiar with the issue. Sometimes we experience difficulties in some places. Then we have to have several meetings. In some places, we immediately get the permission, in others we can't. It depends on the approach of the people and the political approach of the administrators. We have managed to get those permits and implement our work as much as possible.

Participant: *What you are doing is in fact should be done by the state. A non-governmental organization doing fieldwork and giving lectures at schools, etc... Including these subjects in the curriculum, raising awareness, all of these are the duty of the state, ministry of education or other government institutions. It's a bit strange in this respect. In some cases your efforts can be ignored, you cannot get permission and so on. This is a different aspect of it. Of course, since the state does not provide this, somebody must. By chance we can catch up with them all or not. After all, you have worked on these issues in many places. So, what kind of a pressure mechanism can be created for the state to carry out a work in this field? You have the research you carried out in Hakkari and your Cizre report. There are trainings you have facilitated. You say that you also prepared reports on these trainings, with adults, children and teachers. Maybe it is necessary to advocate for these, talk to decision makers and certain authorities of the state, present its deficiencies and discuss what the state can do in these areas. Have you made such an attempt?*

Of course it is possible to do such a thing. But is it possible in Turkey? We prepared the Hakkari report in 2006 and we implemented a rehabilitation project in 2007. The social security law had not passed yet. People with green cards could not benefit from all hospitals and health services. 98% of the people who were mine victims had a green card. They could change their prostheses every three years. Prostheses are plastic. These people live in villages;

work in fields. They have lost their foot but have to get on with their lives. In a very short time, their prostheses would be damaged and they would try to fill that period by tying the prostheses with their own methods, using cloths, bags and tapes. After the Hakkari research, we investigated what we could do about the prosthesis. Dicle University has an Orthotics and Prosthesis Center. We had meetings with them and made a verbal agreement for them to treat 100 mine victims. We ensured that the prostheses of nearly a hundred mine victims were renewed.

We collected the stories of these people and turned them into a book. We sent ten or fifteen copies of that book to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey's Human Rights Commission. We sent it to the members of the parliament that we know and could reach. We did these kinds of things, but in terms of the advocacy, we could not establish any contact other than local authorities. Our willingness is not enough for this. The other party should also be sincere and willing, but of course all this is possible and very important.

Participant: How did the children react when you were doing fieldwork in Hakkari? I also wonder about this. Raising awareness that it's not a security issue anymore but a human rights issue; maybe you have done it, but I find it valuable to explain these especially in western provinces. We can say why the people in Izmir do not know about any of this. We can count a thousand reasons, they didn't come across it, and they had prejudices. For instance, I came from Cyprus. I'm not surprised at all at some things here. I think this is also important. I don't know what do you think?

Of course, it is very important to reach out to everyone everywhere and raise awareness. That's why I also care about what we are doing here. We come together with many friends from different fields and backgrounds to discuss the mine issue, and see that the mine problem is intertwined with many problems and we exchange ideas.

While we were planning this study, we thought a lot about the pedagogical and psychological part of it. How are we going to talk about the bombs and death with children? We worked hard on this issue. But mines are a fact of life. Honestly when we first started to work with children, we were nervous and concerned about how they would react. For this reason, we decided that we should facilitate introductory and cautionary trainings rather than using very in-depth methods that would remind children of other traumas.

Children are not surprised in any way. They never say, “Oh, is there such a thing?” because children know about mines. They start telling their stories by giving examples: “The same thing happened to my brother, that happened to our neighbor’s child.” When we ask them why they play with them, that childish innocent curiosity comes into play. Children need to be constantly warned about them. These weapons are such dangerous and insidious weapons! For example, there is a kind of mine. A green, brightly colored plane-shaped mine and they don’t bury it in the ground either, they just eject it. Even we may think that it’s a toy if we see it. There are mines in canned form. They open them thinking there is food inside. The fact that so many different types are manufactured shows once again that mines are very cruel, inhumanly designed weapons.

CHAPTER SIX

MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

Öztürk Türkođan

What are the activities of İHD (Human Rights Association)? I will explain what İHD has done in the conflict resolution process, but firstly I want to talk about what our association has done. Recently, our activities do not become very visible, especially because of the media blackout. We become more visible during the reform and the conflict resolution processes. Because, during other periods, we document and report the violations directly caused by the state and since these activities do not serve the government's purposes, they do not become visible. Therefore, beyond the question of "What are the activities of a classical human rights organization?" I want to talk about what we are doing as İHD.

We prepare and publish annual right violation reports, along with their statements. It has been done regularly since 1994; though İHD was established in 1986. As the documentation unit of TİHV (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey), which is established by İHD, we prepared regular reports especially on torture, mistreatment, and violations of the right to life and shared them with public. Annual right violation reports, and their statements are also very important, because when we prepare these reports, we not only publish, but also prepare special reports about them.

Annual right violation reports were around 850 pages in 2018. Each figure we have included in that report has a paragraph and a report statement. When these are published, they are also sent to the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Justice and they are asked for further action on these violations. But until now, there has been no response on this subject, besides saying, "We did this, and that on these issues." I can easily tell you that. We hold review meeting every year after preparation of the report statements, and we publish this report with a review. We assess the democracy and human rights situation in Turkey. For example, we made a statement on April 19 this year, together with a short article reviewing 2018. This is an average of twenty to

twenty-one pages. Even the reviews take too long. As the report is too long, we do not have enough time to translate it into English. However, our reviews and report statements are translated into English and sent to the UN, EC and EU institutions, diplomatic missions, international press and international non-governmental human rights organizations, with which we are in contact. They are also sent to the local press. Our website is also an archive; one can find many documents and information on the İHD's website. Our English page has a similar function. Of course, hackers frequently attack our sites. We are trying to keep our site up by taking constant security measures (but hackers are very skilled and know how to somehow get around it).

We prepare special reports. Such reports are prepared when social events are in question. I can give some examples: like the special reports we prepared after Newroz, Gezi, Kobane demonstrations. There are so many of them. For example, rights violations during the curfew declared after armed conflicts that caused severe violations of rights in settlements. There are very specific issues. For example, we have the issue of cemeteries, especially the issue of cemeteries where armed militants are buried. We have environmental issues. Recently, our friends went to Kaz Mountains. Sometimes the dumping issue of a province can be the subject of a report. This can happen with seasonal workers. The lynching attempts against refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers, against Kurds, Alevis and Roma people are the most common cases that we have come across and we have prepared special reports about them. As it is known, there was an incident in Adana yesterday. There were lynching attempts against Syrian refugees. Our Adana desk is announcing a special report on this subject today.

The feature of the special reports is that we send them to the relevant ministry according to the subject and we request the measures stated in the conclusion section are taken. If an effective investigation is required, we inform the relevant prosecutors. If it concerns some other public institutions, we inform them. In one form or another, we inform the public about the issue, and this is important. For example, we had lodged complaints about the reports we prepared on the issue of curfews. I will explain in the second part. While we were petitioning, and we demanded, "Public officials who commit violations there should be investigated," they - the General Staff - started an investigation against us.

We prepared the reports of the Commission for Monitoring Withdrawal and Monitoring the Process in the Peace and Solution Process, between 2013-2015. We held the İHD Communities' Rights Workshop and prepared a report

for the preparations of the peace process. We shared these reports with the public and related parties. As the chairman of the İHD, I took part in the Wise Persons Committee. I still prosecute some works as such.

We prepare alternative reports. As you know, Turkey is member of both the UN and the Council of Europe. The UN has various basic conventions and there are various committees established in the annexes of those conventions. There are alternative shadow reports that we have prepared for these committees. Sometimes we prepare these on our own, sometimes together with other human rights organizations. The UN regularly monitors all countries in the field of human rights. There are reports that we present to this periodic monitoring; they are also a subject of expertise. Let me put it briefly. For example, this year we prepared reports on the Kurdish issue and the peace issue, violations in prisons and of human rights defenders. We worked with children's organizations on children's rights, women's organizations on women's rights, and organizations that form a common human rights platform in the field of general human rights.

There is also the International Human Rights Federation of which we are a member. We are accredited to the UN, and to the Council of Europe as well. There is the European Mediterranean Human Rights Network. Sometimes we prepare with them or we present these reports to them.

How are these reports presented? We present reports about the human rights conditions in Turkey. Then we examine Turkey's state report. We emphasize our views against the state report and determine the questions which we want to ask to the Turkish state and in this way we continue our activities with the UN and EC, on the basis of the presentation of reports.

We have reports submitted to the Council of Europe and the UN Human Rights Commissioner. This is a very regular reporting process. We are in constant contact with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. We are also in constant communication with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. In other words, the general reports, daily reports, special reports and report statements we prepare are constantly translated into English and transferred to them. Here, too, sometimes there can be people from Turkey who work there. They employ Turkish-speaking personnel according to the subject. Then you can also send in Turkish.

These reports might not be considered by the judiciary in Turkey to account those who perform violations. But in the international arena, when the re-

ports of the Turkish state are evaluated, our reports are considered as references and they really can be useful. After these committee meetings Turkey is reminded of its homework, deficiencies, and the things the state should do. In this respect, I would like to point out that these reports are very important.

There are the UN's special reporters. It was probably fifty-one reporters affiliated with the High Commissioner for Human Rights. I think this number is now fifty-two and it is growing. We are in constant communication with special reporters according to the subject. There are different mechanisms, but almost all of them are alike.

The relations we have established with such mechanisms and institutions, and the documents and information we provide to them are very important since they affect the actors and institutions Turkey.

I can say the following about our relations with the EU: We have regular meetings with both the EU Ankara Delegation and the commission in Brussels. All our reports are also forwarded to them. So, when they prepare their annual reports on Turkey or publish their progression reports, they lean on the issues we announced in our reports.

We have reports in which we offer our opinions. The most important of these are the countries that have human rights in their foreign policy and especially accept migrants and refugees frequently. These countries have their respective offices. We suggest our opinions to those offices. What are the human rights conditions in Turkey? Especially after the coup attempt, a great number of people had to flee to European countries and different countries of the world following the application of the state of emergency. They are asking us the conditions in Turkey; we convey to them reports offering our opinions and they certainly are taken as references.

There are countries and organizations that prepare human rights reports to whom we suggest our opinions. These are the USA, Germany, France, England, and various Scandinavian countries. The US was the biggest voice in the world, but with Trump, their influence fell. These reports are not as effective as before as they do not care about them themselves, but they continue it, I can easily say that.

There are opinions we offer to official institutions such as ministries and the Turkish Grand National Assembly. Sometimes we present them *ex officio*. On certain issues, we say, "We have prepared this report, we want the legislation

to change as follows, this issue is discussed in public, and our opinion on it is this, and this is our report about this issue.” We present these reports by making one-to-one meetings. Sometimes they invite us. For example, a new human rights action plan will be prepared; we attend these meetings and present our reports. As it is known, TBMM (Grand National Assembly of Turkey) has specialized commissions. In particular, the Internal Affairs Commission and the Justice Commission invite us when it comes to issues related to human rights, especially in the EU process when the EU is involved. For example, during the conflict resolution process, in 2004, as representatives of İHD, TİHV and MAZLUMDER, we attended to the Internal Affairs Commissions meetings to discuss the law, which we call “the process law” but they preferred to call the “Law on Ending Terrorism and Ensuring Social Integration.” There are laws as the establishment of Turkey’s Institute of Human Rights and Equality, and the law of Enforcement Surveillance Act on which we offer our opinions. We suggest our opinions on many issues such as the preparation of the Data Protection Law. At the current stage, our dialogue continues with only the Ministry of Justice among the ministries. The Ministry of Interior has shut itself down for maintaining its harsh security policies. The TBMM’s bylaw has been changed and they do not apply our opinions as they did before.

Sometimes we submit reports containing third party views to the European Court of Human Rights and the Constitutional Court. This is important. As it is known, procedural laws were changed in Turkey. If there are lawyers among us, they would know, as the criminal procedure has changed, a special expert report can be submitted according to the new Criminal Court Law. In the legal procedure, everyone can submit a special expert report in his or her own case. If there is a human rights issue in high courts and you have worked on this issue, you can prepare and offer a third-party opinion if it is within your field of work. Sometimes they take this into account and accept it. Sometimes they do not. But even if they do not take it into account, rest assured, they always read that report you submitted. This is very important.

During the last curfew process, there were thirty-four applications to the ECHR with serious violations of the right to life. Twenty-six of these thirty-four applications concerned violations of the right to life. We submitted an expert opinion to those files as İHD, TİHV and The Truth Justice Memory Center. That file was denied procedurally. Now we are continuing the processes at constitutional court.

We want the European High Commissioner for Human Rights and the ECHR to intervene in the opinions we have prepared. In some cases, the high com-

missioner accepts our applications and intervenes. S/He was involved in the cases related to the curfew. Lastly, the high commissioner of human rights intervened in the file of Selahattin Demirtaş. There are some other files that have not been discussed yet; we ensure that they are also involved. This is very important because the commissioner, which is an organ of the council, goes to its court and intervenes in the case at your side with you, presenting its own opinion. We offered our third-party opinion in a file on the case of disappearance in custody at the constitutional court, but the court unfortunately applied the statute of limitation. Therefore, that file was rejected for the statute of limitations. But in the end, the court somehow included our application in the file.

We have some attitude documents and statements. These are the attitude documents directly linked to the principles written in our charter. Therefore, those principles are very important to us. It took a long time for those principles to be written into İHD's charter. It was after years of discussion that the first ten principles were originally written. It took eight years. Again, after years of discussions, we raised these principles to fourteen and now we are announcing attitude documents from time to time in accordance with the principles written in that charter. This is very important for us. We hold meetings and statements on human rights and democracy issues, where we express our views on these issues.

We are an association that works directly on application. In other words, if a person thinks that s/he has been violated, s/he should fill in our application form and apply to us. When we receive her/his application, we make complaints and applications to official institutions. It depends on the subject. Recently, the Ombudsman's Office was established in 2012. A way of individual application has been opened to constitutional court. Later, Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey was established and then a variety of human rights boards established. This institution is currently working as an Ombudsman. We have criticisms about Human Rights Institution of Turkey. Our relations with the board have not been very warm lately. Unfortunately, we do not find it necessary to apply. We mostly make applications to the Ombudsman. We get results from some applications, but not from some. This is a long process.

Since the state of emergency, we have been working almost like a semi-government office. In other words, we receive applications and we share those applications to the Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons, the General Directorate of Criminal Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the relevant

ministry, the prosecutor's office, the relevant institution, the Ombudsman's Office, the Parliament's Human Rights Commission. We list our demands; we explain and demand what should happen. They also give us standard answers: "Your applications have been received, research is being done, this is happening, that is happening." Then, when things grew like this, we became like a government office without realizing it. But there is nothing else we can do about it at this stage.

Sometimes there are very specific issues. Most recently, Rights Initiative published a special report. We have published reports on this issue before and did some labor on it. Again, enforced disappearance cases are happening in Turkey. Disappearances in police custody cases had ended in 2004 in Turkey. The most recent disappearance in custody case was in 2004, until the coup attempt. From the end of 2016, from the beginning of 2017, 30 people were kidnapped in the middle of the street in Turkey, unfortunately, we had no news from them for months, they were exposed to severe torture and then were released. The police come and pick them up, take legal action and arrest them. They are either sent to prison or released. İHD applies to prosecution offices upon application and follows the cases in constant communication with the UN working groups. Likewise, initiatives before both the Parliament's Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Interior continue. The Parliamentary Human Rights Inquiry Committee, which was formed after the last period, namely the 2018 elections, is much worse than the previous one and we have no dialogue with this last commission. We write to them about these issues; they give us a written answer. So, we are always in written communication. It is very interesting that we could not meet with a commission named Human Rights Commission. This shows how much the ruling wing of the commission is concerned with human rights. Sometimes they say, "İHD says that many numbers, but they are not that much." For example, we say, "We are satisfied with that much, as long as you solve this problem," but it does not go any further.

There are applications of complaint to the chief public prosecutor's offices. There are very critical cases of torture that sometimes we need to follow. We have applications on those issues. When you file a criminal complaint, you must follow it to the end. This is a judicial process, not like a complaint application. Do not think of it like a complaint application to a government agency. There are cases, which we follow here too, but unfortunately a very long-standing quest for justice is happening in Turkey. So, these are activities that span a long time. Our Diyarbakır desk, our Istanbul desk, and our headquarters conduct this activity regularly. Our other desks do not have the

capacity to conduct this activity regularly, but these activities are carried out through at least a few desks and headquarters.

There are many other methods. Special rapporteurs in the UN have separate procedures. The commissioner in the Council of Europe has a working method. There are cases that we have communicated with different working groups, and when you follow these cases one to one, you can easily get results from them. For example, let me give the following example, during the curfews, there were files we brought to the ECHR, with bill quia timet. Later, defense processes to evaluate in terms of principals were developed. There, we always brought up the situation of Academics for Peace and the healthcare professionals who went to help people in Cizre.

For example, most recently in Turkey, Scholars for Peace, took a deep breath by the constitutional court's ruling and medics were swiftly acquitted. Now I can say these are effective because the high courts are always in contact with each other. When you persistently follow an issue that you are right, you will get its indirect reflections. It is a bit of a complicated process, but I would like to state that we could get it here.

It is known that two commissions were established in the parliament. One of them was established in 2012. It is a sub-commission of the Human Rights Commission. We presented tables to the Investigation Commission on Violations of Right to Life. We also applied to the Parliamentary Investigation Commission, which was established during the Solution Process under the name of the Commission for Investigation of Ways of Social Peace in 2013. For hours, we conveyed our own opinions, reports, and report statements. These reports include all our views.

For example, it is always discussed in public, "How many villages have been evacuated?" According to the official report of the parliament's own commission, 3,428 settlements including 905 villages and 2,523 hamlets were evacuated by force in 20 years. They hardly accepted this concept of forced evacuation. These are the villages evacuated by the state. Here, too, between one and a half million and three million people were displaced by force. You can discuss them at length when you go to those commissions. We have already produced a lot of reports on curfews. We have special reports on almost all of them. You can find the latest updated information about this on the TİHV's website.

Mass graves, for example - Turkey has a mass grave fact. We are working

on this issue. Activities have been minimized now, but it is one of the most important problems that await us in the future. As in Bosnia, Turkey will also dig mass graves in the near future, and it will be a really long process. We had planned to establish a foundation and made all the preparations, but when the conflict and war resumed, we had to postpone this project because our practical field of study is currently closed. That is why I can tell you that we have such a truth. We even found graves from the Armenian Genocide in our field studies; we found many graves from the Dersim Genocide. We also found many mass graves from Kurdish revolts. There are such settlements; we found places that have always been used as mass graves since 1915, for example. We have very interesting findings.

Participant: *Where were those areas concentrated?*

In the east and the south east of Turkey, and in the Kurdish provinces.

Participant: *In all provinces, I guess.*

Not in all provinces, but in these: Diyarbakır, Siirt, Bitlis, Hakkari, Bingöl, Van, Şırnak, Mardin, Dersim, Elazığ, Ağrı, Iğdır, Ardahan, Kars, Adıyaman, Malatya, Hatay and Urfa. Hezbollah also has killing houses that have been identified in different places. I suppose all of them were opened. There is also a mass grave in Antalya. There is an area there where PKK militants were buried in a mass grave in the 1990s. There are also such places. Maybe now it has also occurred in the Black Sea region, because the rule of respect for the dead is not applied anymore. Some of the militants killed in the clashes are left to the land; their bodies are not even taken. Usually they bring a ladle. They dig a place. They bury them altogether, cover them up and leave. There are many mass graves as such.

Why am I talking about this issue now? If we want to talk about the Kurdish issue, we have to mention conflict resolution processes. What has the Turkish state done about confrontation with the past? You may call it Kurdish rebellion or Kurdish revolt or massacre or genocide or whatever you want. Turkish state has rarely wondered the consequences of these incidents.

The case in which thirty-three people were killed in Van's Özalp district is officially thirty-two, but it is thirty-three. For example, a research commission was established in the parliament, but this commission did not give a report, they did not work. The most famous one is the 1993 Unsolved Murder Investigation Commission Report. There is a commission report, but it was

not discussed in the general assembly. It is known that there are seventeen thousand unsolved murders; these all became discussable after the investigation commission's report on the unsolved political murders. However, the numbers are not correct. There is a report on Sivas Massacre. Again, this report on the events in the Southeast in 1993 was discussed and likewise a commission was established in 1994, but there is no report again. There is a report on Border Safety. That is because it concerns the Kurdish issue. About Metin Göktepe; there is a famous Susurluk Report. The head of the Prime Ministry Inspection Board, Kutlu Savaş, prepared the main text of this report. Later, this research commission was established and discussed in the parliament. There is a report, dated 1997, on the evacuated settlements. There are also reports on Uğur Mumcu's murder, children, custom and honor killings. There is a report on Hakkari, Yüksekova and Şemdinli about the "good boys" mentioned by the former chief of staff. Do you know that those "good boys" were acquitted lastly? They were acquitted.

Do you know who founded the first human rights association in Turkey? Marshal Fevzi Çakmak founded it; he is among its founders. Isn't it interesting? In Adnan Menderes period, there was a former chief of staff, namely a marshal, among those who established the first association named Human Rights Association (İHD). Sometimes, if I reluctantly talk, I say: "We have a serious name, even Fevzi Çakmak became the founder of an association with this name." They have already given three months off, three months later they closed it. Then there was another attempt, but they did not allow it, it was never even established. Then, in 1986, this association was founded as the Human Rights Association.

Coups Investigation Commission was established. We participated in the commission work for the sub-commission report of the Human Rights Investigation Commission, which was established in 2011 and worked in 2012, and we contributed to this report. We also participated in the Commission for the Investigation of Ways of Social Peace and the Evaluation of the Solution Process, and we explained them at length about all our work there. Our views take place in all those reports, sometimes as a different view and sometimes as a dissent. At least, the main arguments we want to mention were included in these reports, although sometimes in the form of "as he said."

Now we come to the most difficult topic, because we must address the issue of accountability together with impunity and confrontation with the past. In other words, the most important feature of human rights studies is to identify, document and report violations. But it does not finish there. Because

you need to seek justice, justice must be served. It is not sufficient, because you have to cooperate with the victim; solidarity with victims is an important activity. It is not sufficient, because you must create public opinion. You must form a democratic public opinion, you must create public pressure, and you must receive public support so that the victim might be satisfied conscientiously as the victim's victimization is heard. Again, the conscience of the victim might be satisfied as justice is fulfilled. It is necessary to develop these processes and work to raise awareness here.

Then how do we really fix the violation? The most important way to fix a violation is justice. Because the violation has taken place, the damage is done. People are dead, injured, tortured and the settlements are demolished; the damage is done. But justice must be fulfilled so that social coexistence can continue. We say social peace, how will we live together? Someone will always come and kill you, burn, destroy, torture you. You cannot always have a quiet state. So, if you are human, you will rebel, you will oppose, or you say I do not want to live anymore.

For example, Mahmur Camp was formed in this way. It's always mentioned on TV: There is a camp called Mahmur Camp situated fifty kilometers away from south of Erbil. I visited it two or three times. Why did that camp occur? Do you know that? Villagers who saved their lives from the villages that were forcibly evacuated in Şırnak migrated from their homes to there. They said: "We don't want to live in such a country anymore."

Tahir Elçi carried the Massacre of Kuşkonar Village (when 34 villagers were bombed by F16s) to ECHR and there is ruling given by court against Turkey. For example, later a report is published by a delegation formed by İHD for investigation, and our reports were also used in those cases.

They also frequently benefited from our reports on the evacuated villages. In the 1990s, especially İHD who took great risks for training of lawyers on the applications to the ECHR carried out training projects. Those studies were done with great difficulties. The state does not allow it. They have always experienced all these processes and difficulties, and they have always sought justice starting from the field of international law. They put great efforts. We always remember with love the friends who contributed.

That is how Mahmur Camp was established. The people who could not stand these conditions have left. Currently, it is a village with a population of twelve thousand; even we may call it not a village, but a town. There are a few more

camps that are not talked about. For example, there is a delta in Adana Karataş where Ceyhan River flows. There are Kurdish people from the evacuated villages who still live in the barracks in that delta. Now, let's say 1993-1994, and we are now in 2019, 25 years have passed. That is justice that has not been fulfilled for 25 years. Ongoing victimization! The consequences of this are dire, of course! It is very, very heavy for generations. In this respect, these reports and these evidences are very important.

Our most recent report on Cizre made a lot of noise. Just when we created that report, I attended to the meeting of the shadow report we submitted to the UN's Committee Against Torture in 2016. Several friends in Switzerland immediately got organized and the report was translated into English. This report was also sent to all the UN organs and awareness was raised about what really was going. The General Staff immediately wrote a letter, saying: "The reports prepared by İHD, Diyarbakır Bar Association, TİHV, Gündem: Çocuk (Agenda: Children's Association), Health Workers Union may cause the prosecution of TSK (Turkish Army Forces) members in the future." So, "Block them!" This is a memorandum; they wrote a memorandum. Interior Minister Efkan Ala considered this as an order. He gave his approval immediately in June 2016. Two chief inspectors came to us. "Why are you here?" we asked, "We came on instructions." they replied.

Participant: *Why did not you share this evidence with the public?*

We shared it; but we are so busy that it is just one of the agendas for us. We shared it; its investigations are still ongoing. Then, just then, there was the coup. One of the inspectors was suspended because he was affiliated with FETÖ (Fethullah Terrorist Organization). "What will happen?" asked the other inspector, I said, "What will happen? The state of emergency will be declared first and then they will hurt all of us." We know Turkey very well. There was a coup attempt, and the coup was suppressed. The President says: "It's a blessing from God." He will probably make a countercoup. The only way for that is the state of emergency. You cannot do these without declaring a state of emergency. Anyway, then this inspection took three months. Then it took nine months to write the report. A year later the report came out. The prosecutor summoned me; I went. I said: "Mr. prosecutor, the following issues do not take the interest. These are the activities we carry out within the knowledge of the Undersecretariat of Public Security during the conflict resolution process. So, let's not get into that." There is nothing in the other part anyway. He could not find a solution either, the case waited for two years. Now, they sent me a fine of 614 TL for the violation of association law. They could not get out of

it. They sent the case to the Ministry of Justice for investigation permission from 301. They also opened another investigation, with the accusation of making propaganda for an illegal organization. So, this is where we are after three years! The inspector could not find a solution, he wrote everything: To break the unity of the state, to defend conscientious objection, to recognize the Armenian Genocide, to determine about the solution of the Kurdish problem in the countryside.

I will also explain the lawsuit processes about them. For example, I am joint attorney in the 28 February case. I said to those congregation prosecutors of that time, "As İHD, we want to be participate to this investigation." He persistently wrote me as a real person, but he wrote next to my name "President of the İHD." So even there they did not fully admit our intervention.

For example, the 1998 memorandum is a memorandum prepared during the 28th of February: "Close RP, close İHD, and close HADEP." The names of the journalists were listed in it: "They should be disposed of, arrested." Now it is a criminal document. We have an ongoing case for that document at the ECHR. When that document was disclosed, after 2000, we filed a criminal complaint to the State Security Prosecutor's Office but it was not prosecuted. Later in AKP period, I think it was 2009, they amended the law concerning the trial of soldiers in civil court. As soon as that amendment was recognized, we filed again a criminal complaint. These congregational prosecutors did such a thing. They were preparing for February 28th. It took too long, and then the February 28 case was filed. A lawsuit was filed, there was everything in the indictment, and only the section that we as İHD wanted to be included in the indictment was not there. So that was the actual part the criminals could be penalized. Because they had the RP (Welfare Party) shut down. They made the assassination attempt on Akin Birdal, they carried out the acts of intimidation of journalists. They have done all of them, there was nothing left they have not done. They did everything written in that document and they did all this during February 28th. Turkey also has such things, it should not dissuade - this is a process.

We have hundreds of reports on unsolved murders. The number of lawsuits we could bring before the court after all efforts is sixteen. Fourteen of them ended by acquittal, two cases remained. The case of the late Musa Anter continues. Also, the Ankara JITEM case, in which Mehmet Ağar was on trial, continues. Two cases remain. In the September 12 case, they awaited the death of Kenan Evren and Ahmet Tahsin Şahinkaya. In other words, they expected them to die during the Supreme Court process. They were both seriously ill

and died later; they dropped the case after their deaths. We are currently five lawyers. We are stubborn; we appealed that case again. The file is at the Supreme Court, who will most likely approve and finalize it, then go to the Constitutional Court, then to the ECHR.

Why should it not discourage you? Unfortunately, this is the way things work in Turkey. We are an association established against September 12. The day after the 12 September 2010 referendum, we made the first criminal complaint. Fortunately, they let us speak first this time, but they did not accept our intervention. They said, "You were established after the coup." It was not possible for us to be established in the coup. But the court did something like this: They were really giving floor to the İHD and they wrote "President of İHD" next to my name. They found such a method to relieve their embarrassment. So, we were not officially intervened, but I do intervene the case as the lawyer of others. But İHD is actually the participant in the case. You will experience these situations.

In Turkey, it is difficult to call state officials to account for because the state mechanism is exactly monument of impunity in Turkey. Especially the latest decree-laws rendered more difficult to judge them. So, it is difficult unless a new constitution is accepted.

Turkey has a typical hostile criminal / trial system. The procedural provisions of the various criminal procedure laws operate the system. So, the system works like this: There is a council called the National Security Council (MGK). MGK produces the National Security Policy Document. In the National Security Policy Document, an internal and external enemy is defined every five years. Every five years it is written who is the internal enemy. Organizations, social segments connected with organizations are listed. Non-governmental organizations, political parties, foundations, associations connected with them are all are listed and categorized one by one. All of them are numbered and the relevant part of the National Security Policy Document is sent to the Ministry of Justice.

Demirtaş was arrested the evening before (an old investigation, from 2016, which is closed by indictment; it was not closed while it should have been closed). In other words, a normal judge would never sign such an arrest warrant. There is also a method like this here. There is always a secret investigation number about everybody, important public figures. They keep it in reserve, to use when needed. Government officials are not as inexperienced. Now, therefore, it is very important to follow these criminal complaints and investigation processes.

Participant: *You are a lawyer. I wonder, seeing as they are very long processes after all, whether the unsolved murders or other issues such as village evacuations (not only the 1990s, but the 12 September Coup, 1915, we can go back a long time), how is this reflected in society? In other words, pessimism emerges when justice is not fulfilled, and impunity continues. But I really wonder what its sociological reflection is. You might say "I'm not a psychologist," but I wonder your answer.*

I can share my observations. My most vivid observation is as follows: We held a sit-in here with the relatives of the disappeared with the Peace Mothers. Every Saturday, Saturday mothers, relatives of the disappeared, and human rights defenders hold sit-ins in Istanbul. This is a great trauma.

In Turkey, there is a huge social trauma. Therefore, in the upcoming period, Turkey's most important issue that should be dealt with will be that social trauma. In this regard, we took action to establish a trauma institute within the body of TİHV. A Trauma Institute will be established soon. Because there are various traumas of the social segments in Turkey; Kurds, Alevis, marginalized social groups, women, disabled people, Gypsies, different ethnic groups, victims of torture, relatives of those who were tortured. For example, after the coup; considering the latest data from the Ministry of Justice, there are hundreds of thousands of people from the conservative community who have been detained and arrested. If you consider their families, at least a million people have gone through trauma. Therefore, Turkey has a huge social trauma and dealing with this trauma requires long labor.

On one hand, this develops the will to fight, and on the other hand, the feeling of weariness. They are trying to dominate society by fear but thanks to these struggling people, that climate of fear loses its influence. On the one hand, there is a serious fear in the society, on the other hand, the people who pay the price break that fear.

We called them many times. I was sending messages to their lawyers because the torture rumors which I heard were horrible. We said, "Families, please come and contact us, we will take care of you."

For example, we are very closely concerned with these kidnapping cases. The number could have been horrible. Yes, we want to bring them to account, we want to deal with that impunity by bringing it to justice, but on the other hand, solidarity is developing. There is a huge "victim group" in Turkey and the trauma which they went through is huge.

Recently, Mother Elmas died. Anik Can died. Fortunately, Mother Anik at least found the body of her son. But Mother Elmas could not find it and left without seeing her child's grave. The late Mother Berfo looked at Kenan Evren from the screen at the September 12 trial hearing - Berfo Ana was 104 years old, we brought her to the courtroom in a wheelchair. She called him every name in the book. Perhaps that was one of the most important moments in her life. But she left without rejoining her child.

So social trauma in Turkey is so powerful. Registration statistics, the Ottoman archives were recently made accessible to the public. Registration records are now accessible to everyone. Many families have just learned of their ethnicity. Confrontation with assimilation began. We need to talk these issues in the context of dealing with past, truth and justice. There is a complicated situation here.

But we say, "Justice heals." Let's continue to seek justice. Even if we do not believe it, we continue seeking it. We must continue because as soon as we stop seeking justice, we can join the group of violators. Therefore, the idea of justice is very important. On the other hand, we say: "Struggle heals." Life comes with struggle. We must fight; we have no other choice. It is a constant struggle; there is no other way. If you isolate yourself and say, "Let me rest my head for a little bit," there is no such a thing.

It is very important to follow these investigation processes. For example, what are we doing? The process we follow about the people who were burned in the basement in Cizre and the bodies we could detect is as the following: Criminal complaint, non-prosecution, objection, finalization, Constitutional Court; pursue, then go to the ECHR, seek justice there. How many years... On the other hand, the compensation processes start. We often leave them to lawyers dealing with private law. Because there can be an economic gain. Compensation processes run more comfortably and smoother. There is such a reality.

Besides, not everyone can deal with these issues. Recently, we encountered such a practical problem. On the one hand, you must do these, but on the other hand, there are very few people who can do this. For example, legal knowledge must be competent. You must know the principles of the ECHR, you must know Jordan principles, and you must know the investigative procedure problems. In such cases, you must know which paths should be pursued. In a sense, we invite the bar associations to take continuous action to provide training for our lawyer friends. Legal organizations are constantly working.

On the other hand, whenever we find the opportunity, we try to train our lawyer friends on such issues. This is not just about your intention. You need to know certain things. You must know very special investigation procedures and methods so that you can force the legal system to collect evidence and to operate these processes.

There are lawsuits we are following which we have barely opened. We must follow them. There are coup cases, there are cases of unknown assailants; I can give examples of these. There are some torture cases or there are cases related to social events, which we intervene. Generally, they permit the intervention of non-governmental organizations in femicide cases. Some judges can take initiative in this regard, but in some cases they do not. For example, they did not in the Soma and Suruç massacres, but as an association we intervened Ankara Station Massacre. In addition, we continue this activity in the lawsuits we participated as intervener.

There are also counter-lawsuits; there are investigations and lawsuits filed against our friends. At every opportunity we are accused of “affiliation with terrorist organizations,” we are accused of being supporters of these organizations. Recently, the number of investigations and lawsuits passed over 300. In these cases, we defend ourselves persistently and stubbornly. We attend the trials constantly; we try to catch up everywhere. It usually ends in acquittal, but there are others that end in punishment.

What do we do when it ends in punishment? We send our friends abroad. İHD has a great diaspora in the world. We have several members who are strong enough to establish desks in thirty countries. We have representation offices in Australia and Switzerland, but we do not allow other countries because we cannot control them; because at times organizations get involved and we cannot get out of it. Hasan Anlar, our former general secretary, had to go to Switzerland. Our Adana desk president is also in Switzerland.

In this last period, some groups tried to come over us institutionally, but somehow, they could not achieve this due to our independence in our activities and our stance in principles. Thousands of associations were closed during the state of emergency declaration. Some has asked me, “Why didn’t they shut you down? You have been struggling with them for years.” Because we are an independent organization, the relevant units of the state also know how independent we are in this regard. In addition, the activities we carry out are very important. We are the people who strive all the evil produced by this state. Reversely, there is a need for people who strive the evils produced

by the state, ensure their elimination, seek justice, and keep the society healthy in order for some relations to function; in order to prevent the deterioration of the social structure. This is a sociological reality. You must think reversely. When you consider this reversely, there is no one who can do this activity. If the state destroys this area, it destroys itself. Otherwise, revolts would occur; all environments would be terrorized; people would be pushed to use violence as a means of struggle. Therefore, states cannot overstep the mark in some matters. When do they overstep? When they go in total war. All-out war is one of the situations where human rights are suspended temporarily. Besides, international relations, UN, Council of Europe, and issues such as the commitment of the EU and some powerful states to human rights in their foreign policy are important facts. In all this time, experiences, relationships, exchanges of views etc. It helped us overcome all these processes.

Participant: *Does torture under custody continue?*

The methods of torture changed in Turkey. We hear a lot about Fethullah Gülen organization investigations after the coup attempt. They do not do this in standard detention centers. They take them out of detention centers, take them elsewhere and they do it there. There is no recording there, no camera. So now when you say, "Torture is being done in custody," you lose ground. Because this has not been done in officially registered detention centers.

Moreover, they do it in the detention process. They break your door and enter your house. They humiliate you in front of your children. They rear-handcuff the suspect. They put the suspects in the vehicle by using violence, squeeze them in the vehicle, and hit them. They spray gas in their eyes and face. Are these practices not torture? When suspects are already detained there, when they are in the detention room, they do a good part of what they want to do. If there is a special situation related to the suspect, other teams take him/her away and torture him/her. Then they silence him/her with threat and intimidation.

There are such torture methods that when you go to the doctor, there is nothing in your appearance, but when you put a plastic bag on your head and apply the torture of choking you, you turn red and bruise. This is torture. But it does not appear when you go to the forensic doctor for daily checkup. Sometimes men are tortured by rape with a truncheon. None of them talk to a doctor. Normally, the doctor should perform an examination according to the Istanbul Protocol. This is not done. All the doctors in charge of examining

in Forensic Medicine should perform examinations according to the Istanbul Protocol, not according to their wishes. The rules in the Istanbul Protocol are clear and they must examine you, but they do it only if you complain. In this case, torture cannot be determined.

Despite this, many people started to write to minutes the torture inflicted on them in courtrooms or in the court of inquiry. They started speaking in the courts. Thirty abducted people were already tortured continuously. Different methods are also used in prisons.

Method and location have changed but torture continues in Turkey. It continues systematically. Because this is something we see almost everywhere. As it is known, it resurfaced because of the coup period and the state of emergency. We are very sorry about this. We thought we made progress, but unfortunately Turkey brought it back again. Of course, nobody should imagine these conditions as Diyarbakır No. 5. But, torture is torture. We say, “degrading behavior” right? We say “mistreatment.” The state is trying not to use the word torture because the word torture evokes bad things, but all of them are torture. Mistreatment and degrading behavior are banned. Sometimes you beat someone until the evening, s/he would not be affected at all. But you slap her/him, s/he would not be able to forget this for her/his life. This is torture. It is the effect it creates on you.

Along with the issue of impunity, it is necessary to talk about accountability. There is a state policy in Turkey. Turkey always maintains its own government officials. This is a matter of immunity. It is known that the state always protects its officials with a shield of immunity. This is usually explained as follows: “Subject to crimes committed by virtue of duty.” But what is the difference between torturing and detaining a suspect in terms of duty offense? How can it be determined? Therefore, the application is very important. A protection policy is always being developed and it is something that must be dealt with.

After the coup attempt was suppressed, the president, the interior minister, the justice minister and the prime minister should say on television: “Soldiers, police officers, intelligence officers, judges, prosecutors: Torture is forbidden. Do not even slap anyone, the officers found guilty from torture will be punished.” If they do not say... Alas they did not say it anyway. For a long time, the President did not use the phrase “Torture is forbidden.” He is newly saying, “Zero tolerance to torture.” Well, why did you not use this sentence in the year of coup? This is very, very important. Some se-

curity units admit this and say, “We have given broad authority which we cannot control.” Why did you give it? Giving broad authority means “You can torture.”

Judicial culture has formed, this is much more dangerous. Protectionism, the protection of the prosecutor, the protection of the judge... The police shoot in social events... Ethem Sarisülük, the murder of the student in Muğla, the murder of Berkin Elvan, the murder of Ali İsmail Korkmaz, for example. The judicial culture constantly protects the criminal. “How I can give the minimum penalty; how I can protect.” This understanding, this culture is developing. Why? Because “this” is a government official, “that” is an enemy of the state and very dangerous.

In the matter of the legal protection of state officials, a law numbered 6722 was enacted just a day before the latest coup attempt. This law gives government permission to all government officers or public officers who participate in all kinds of security operations, and those who help them; and it is one of the worst laws in the history of the Turkish Republic. During the curfews, the General Staff always wanted legal protection. Firstly, Chief of General Staff received a warranty signed by Ahmet Davutoğlu. They handled issues with that warranty. Then they passed a special law on July 14, 2016. They edited that law in the manner that included past practices. In other words, the trial of those who participated in the operations in the 1990s is now subject to permission. This is terrible. Despite this, ECHR said, “First, go to the Constitutional Court of Turkey.”

With the existence of this law Turkey’s Constitutional Court can do nothing. There is nothing they can do. Because nobody claimed that this law was unconstitutional. Constitutional Court itself cannot request the annulment of that law. This was one of Haşim Kılıç’s biggest mistakes. There was a discussion then: “If a rule is found to be unconstitutional in an individual application or if such a claim is raised, should the general assembly also decide on the unconstitutionality of that law?” We suggested, “Conclude it”, but they did not. Now Turkey is suffering a lot due to this law.

There are such laws that no court can dare and claim that it is unconstitutional. Nobody can bring up the unconstitutionality of that law because that court cannot put forward. So, what are we going to do? It will take years to deal with these laws, by the political struggle. Therefore, legal protection issue is very important.

They also made a special provision in the state of emergency decrees. They were taken under all kinds of protection during the state of emergency. Not only legal protection, but also all kinds of criminal, judicial and financial protection; they legislated for themselves a more comprehensive than temporary article (15th) of Kenan Evren's 1982 Constitution. Unfortunately, they did that too. So, the situation is not good.

One of the most important dimensions of this impunity is the erosion of international human rights values and the incapacity of courts such as the ECHR to defend their own values. The consequences of impacts of Turkey's lobbying activities on The Council of Europe and ECHR are very heavy. The UN human rights institutions cannot be more effective because it does not suit the US' book. The corruption of these five permanent members has caused a terrible erosion of human rights values around the world. As the EU does not stand up for their basic principles, due to prioritization of political and economic relations, rulership of countries like Turkey becomes stronger. Our biggest problem in the last period was the attitude of the ECHR.

The problem in Turkey is very complicated, very comprehensive. For this reason, a process of confronting the past must be experienced. As the Human Rights Association, we have a law proposal submitted by a deputy on this subject. The Prime Minister had said, "I will apologize if it is needed," about Dersim Genocide. We said: "You cannot apologize that way. You can only apologize by enacting a law about this issue."

Turkey must start and run a process of confronting the past which starts from the day when the second constitutional era started - the day when İttihat and Terakki Party (Party of Union of Progress) came to power and made its ideas actual. The Armenian Genocide, Dersim Genocide, massacres against Kurds, coup period violations, violations in prisons, violations against opponents of the regime, all kinds of communists, religious etc. violations against what happened; by organizing sub-categories as violations against minorities within the scope of the Treaty of Lausanne, truths should be revealed, and they should be discussed with justice.

So, you will either apply to restorative justice or you will go to criminal justice. I think that the way of the criminal justice does not exist in Turkey. Even in the Roboski Massacre, a criminal justice could not be achieved. Not a single person has been questioned as a suspect about the people who were burned alive in the basements of Cizre. These happened at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. These events are more recent ones, and no one has been

testified as a suspect because of these incidents. Therefore, we think that the issue of restorative justice should be discussed more.

But the most important thing is the truth; because this society must face the truth. Those who present themselves as Turkish must face the truth. The biggest problem is the state's face-off with these issues. However, not only the state but also society has to face it; because as a result - those who have historical consciousness know - after every genocide people associated with them. The properties and lands of the victims of the genocide were confiscated; their wealth was confiscated.

I will mention a very interesting determination of mine about this issue and end my speech. I wondered how the peace of zoning incidents took place in Turkey. In Atatürk's period there was one: After the population exchange there were people leaving and people coming, and properties were re-designed. Menderes made one in 1956, Özal in 1984, and Tayyip in 2017. In every thirty or thirty-five years citizens of Turkey confiscate properties, which were once confiscated by the Republic of Turkey. This is a very, very important issue. Therefore, our society must face the past.

Therefore, society also must face and accept it. It must be admitted it is associated with this injustice so that we can deal with that social trauma. Otherwise, it is impossible; we cannot handle it. I can never say, "There will be no major violations in the future," if we do this. My impression from my own experience is that the truth will reveal itself and we will face the truth. Perhaps only then we might call out and hold account. Does society attend this process voluntarily? No one wants to participate.

I was in Rize yesterday. I walked down the street, walked a few hundred meters, and looked around. Nearly all people are originating from Laz, there are very little Turkish ethnic typologically. There are various ethnic groups there. But they have all been dragged into incredibly different places. Assimilation ruined everything. Do not underrate that assimilation issue, assimilation continues. Especially, cultural assimilation continues seriously. Therefore, we all need to get involved in this confrontation process as part of society. Maybe we need to think about this a little bit. Since very serious crimes are committed, we always focus on them. But there are also issues that we are not interested in.

The issue of adopting young girls taken after the Armenian Genocide by military families has always been handled and novels have been written about

it. For example, it is known that Alparslan Türkeş learns that her mother is Armenian. He goes to Armenia. He visits the Genocide Museum. He leaves flowers at the Genocide Memorial. There are pictures. I claim this with a basis. Many things in his mind change. Even Alparslan Türkeş faced confrontation. But his life did not survive; I think he died as suspiciously as Özal.

For example, why was Hrant Dink killed? Because he said that Sabiha Gökçen was an Armenian girl. That is why he was threatened. That is the real reason. Okay, how can a regime sustain itself like this? In our age, different ethnicities really empower society, not wealth, which is something different, something measurable. This should now be accepted. The facts of the 21st century and people's view have changed, and it is not the same as before. That is why I think it's important.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *I do not think that this issue is only related to Turkey. There are different situations in every country. Since there is also a very serious denial... In fact, if the confrontation begins, something will emerge for all segments. For example, I live in Mardin. People living in Derik are proud of themselves on being very comfortable and even very secular. One day I could not stand it and asked friend in the hospital: "You are from Derik; you might be Armenian." Because I could not stand their bragging. This was an example. For example, another Kurdish friend of mine said, "Are you ready to face the Assyrians?" he said about the plots. Likewise, this applies to Cyprus. As most of our people my grandmother now lives in a Greek house. That is why all segments must face something, and I guess this scares people. I want to attribute to this, a friend of mine, a clinical psychologist, used to work with young people in Armenia, but he was Turkish and one day he pushed some Armenian children intensively... Then I watched his pictures on the video. He told them as a psychologist: "We must build a new Turkish identity, so psychologically we cannot accept it." I said: "Did you say that?" "Because psychologically this is the truth," he said.*

Participant: *While I was listening to you, despite all your warnings, I fell into despair. On the one hand, I thought about what should be done; we need to do something. So, we participate in these studies for this reason. We are searching for answers. If you can talk specifically about the difficulties of working, maybe it would give us a little more inspiration and courage, for the people who are still at the beginning. I also want to ask a technical question. How difficult is it to coordinate with other institutions? Because*

İHD is a very special institution; a special institution that even the state hesitates to take on. Indeed, İHD needs to be an authority. Especially the dissidents and the oppressed people must always consider its views. So, in what extent can political parties - we have several serious political parties - coordinate with you? For example, we experienced the Roboski process. It is still seriously unknown for all of us. Recently, a political party self-criticized bringing the lawsuit process to ECHR. Was İHD involved in this or was there a point where your expectations were not met, or did you intervene afterwards? Maybe this would be a good starting point for collaboration with other institutions.

Participant: *While I was talking about the changes in the structure of the courts, I meant the following: I see a difference even considering the Resolution Process. For example, in the YouTube ruling, the Twitter ruling, and the rulings regarding access blocking, the Constitutional Court found acceptable, the applications directly made without exhausting internal authorities. It even gave a violation ruling. Then there was an institution named Telecommunications Communication Presidency (TİB). TİB by acting a court - an administrative organization - gave rulings. You just mentioned - it fits very well with the situation regarding the unknown murders - a law has been enacted, but this law is neither predictable nor expectable. It is necessary to apply directly to the Constitutional Court. Here again, I think the problem is related to the Kurdish issue and I wonder if Constitutional Court members are being replaced. Recently, a person named Yıldız Seferinoğlu was appointed to the Constitutional Court; he is a former AKP deputy. Now, the candidates appointed by R. T. Erdoğan have replaced the candidates appointed by A. Gül. With the transition from the Resolution Process to the conflict process, we see that the members of the courts have been replaced. What kind of consequences should we expect from these incidents? The Constitutional Court has also made a violation ruling in the case of Abdullah Öcalan. It had a tremendous impact on the Oslo Process. The court gave a violation ruling for the seizure of Abdullah Öcalan's defenses at the ECHR while they were in print. But the same court gave a refusal about Roboski. I think a positive atmosphere is being created by ECHR in favor of Turkey. Turkey seems to be protected by some organizations because of its refugee policy. I wonder what you think about this issue.*

Participant: *You suggested restorative justice, not criminal one, on this confrontational issue. Like your village, my village is an Armenian village too. Their lands were already deedless. Later, the registration with title deed was done. Everyone had seized some lands from Armenians. The experts said: "This is*

yours, that is hers and etc.” Will these restorative justice commissions return these properties to their rightful owners when confronted? In other words, will the creditor’s tangible or moral rights be compensated?

Participant: *You said that you submitted a report to the immigration offices in the issue of the political asylum applications made to other countries after 15 July. Do they take this into account, and do you still receive individual applications in this process? If it happens, can you help? Considering a huge population is now on trial, they are subject to similar processes.*

The things I am saying are very serious matters and you may be discouraged. When I say, “Don’t be discouraged,” I mean: What kind of society do we want to live in as human beings? What kind of people do we want to be? We all learnt first from the family, then from the environment, from the school, and from our surroundings. So how much can we resist injustice? Do we want justice? There are very simple concepts. We are all honorable people. What you do not want to be exposed to in the community is your honor. So, you want to be equal with everyone. On the one hand, you want to be free, but you want justice and peace. If you defend them, that is sufficient. The important thing is to have inner peace. It is very important to have peace of mind. There will always be pressure from outside. But if you have peace of mind here, if you are doing it by having peace of mind, you will already carry out this activity. This is the thing where you get strength.

And of course, everyone has a character, a personality. Not everyone can fight. Some are less, some are more, but ultimately, not everyone can be involved in advocacy to the same degree. Some can support this. For example, there were people who supported the struggle for human rights in Turkey, although they were not in sight. When you are concerned about society, you can be sure that you will see the magical and magical power of the concept of human rights because everybody wants it. In this country, they made people shout, “Down with human rights!” but those who shout that slogan also need human rights. Turkey is full of examples of this. Oddly enough, Tayyip, a political prisoner, has now produced thousands of political prisoners like himself. On the one hand, there are such examples. So, I think the important thing here is; if you have peace of mind, if you are determined to fight, that is enough. Beyond that, frankly, I cannot say much. It varies from person to person.

Of course, İHD has relations with other political parties. There is one with HDP. From time to time, CHP invites us on important issues and to some of its meetings to exchange views. There are other different political parties... We

are also struggling for democracy and we can bring together many political parties and social groups in very difficult times. You may wonder the level of this. At least we can bring together forty or fifty percent of Turkey's population, but there some segments which do not even want to get together with us. Normally we have the potential to bring one hundred percent together, but sometimes it is not in your hands.

Human rights defenders are helping everywhere ember falls. This being the case, when you deal with the most difficult issue and strike your attitude, the political parties - that have policies that prevent the solution of that grave issue and contribute to the continuation of the violation - already stay away from you. You should know that this is the first subject they will talk to you about. The first issue that I will talk with MHP is the Kurdish issue; the first issue that I will talk to with AKP, CHP and Good Party is again the Kurdish issue; because the system designs itself accordingly to those delicate issues. This is a classical ideological, assimilationist nation-state. Do you want to stand by the assimilationist nation-state or the democratic republic? It is that simple! Are you a side of the transformations through which Europe went or are you still living in the 1930s?

Even the British Empire, on which the sun never set, experienced conflict resolution. Even England who rules the world, had to confront. They neither needed it. If England wanted to maintain the war, it has the capacity to wage it for a hundred years, but it has changed and transformed. Why are you still stubbornly insisting that everyone will be Turkish? Now there is nothing to talk about with these people anyway. I only try to persuade him, to dissuade him from this false thought. We still struggle with people with very primitive thinking. Sometimes we get stuck. I really cannot believe it. The religion he believes does not tell him that. He altered his religion and ideology. Something strange has happened. How will you persuade him?

That is why we are not afraid of them, because we are the majority. We will ensure the transition to a pluralist democratic order. Turkey's society has the struggle experiences from past. You can be sure that we say so much. I always say this: All these evils taught us to struggle, we created a culture of democracy, and this is very important. For this reason, we already maintain this struggle. We are not hopeless; do not think that way. But also, in the face of gangrenous problems... That is why I return to restorative justice. There is no other way for us.

Now they cannot find a solution. They have the judicial package; the numbers

are horrible. Everything is turned upside down. Turkey has become a crime heaven; theft, extortion etc. Loot, and get no punishment. Look at the point we are brought by AKP? Look at the criminal files of those who killed the engineer boy from İTÜ (İstanbul Technical University). Imagine, one shouts a slogan... Demirtaş is sentenced four years and eight months. Now who is dangerous for this state? Demirtaş is dangerous, as he is not a usurper. That state, that government, which is ruled like this, is played out. If a state has declined to a system that will expose disgraceful and common criminals, it does not have a chance to survive. When we say decay, we mean this. Therefore, we are right, and we will resolve this problem somehow.

We are not involved in the Roboski issue. If we are concerned with an issue, we take it seriously. We have suffered a lot in the past because of this attitude. Our legal commissions pursue lawsuits till the end. There is continuity in our association. The procedure in the Constitutional Court is very, very strict. They send the deficiency letter to only one lawyer. There are always too many lawyers in any case with a power of attorney. A simple deficiency letter is all it takes; if you do not correct that deficiency within fifteen days, they receive you a rejection response. Since a simple deficiency was not corrected and that document was not sent on time, they denied a case procedurally.

In the last period ECHR passes the ball in the cases concerning Turkey's national security policy, to the Constitutional Court. The Council of Europe does not want to get involved in these issues too much. ECHR is not like it was in the 1990s. It was contributing to these issues in those years. In the last period, the difference is that the new countries that emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the judges from the old eastern bloc reduced the quality. In addition, Russia's occupation of Ukraine, and its violations there; there is also a decline in Europe. Alongside the depreciation in the context of the human rights values, there is also a very strong lobby influence of Turkey due to financial issues. In total, ECHR said, "You already have the right of individual application. Exhaust the Constitutional Court option and apply again." "The Constitutional Court is right," it said on the Roboski issue.

What are we doing to get through these conditions? We are looking for new methods with our friends, including İHD lawyers. In other words, we deal with processes such as launching an investigation and collecting evidence from the beginning. It will take time for the Roboski issue, but there is no other option because there are so many victims. For example, the deceased have legal heirs who have never applied. There is a search for re-application through them. Friends are working on this issue.

After the curfew incidents, we applied for injunction. The Constitutional Court rejected our appeal in 2016. The president of the court goes to the palace and invites the President for the establishment anniversary of the Constitutional Court. Journalists ask questions after his visit. He had a controversy with the President about Can Dündar's case. The Constitutional Court had given a freedom of expression ruling in Can Dündar's case. In his defense, the president of the court says: "We do not give rulings which are contrary to the government on issues concerning the national security policies of the state; what should we do more?" When one mentions the national security policies of the state, s/he mentions the Kurdish issue. This speech of the president of the court was not refuted later. Sputnik news channel, Cumhuriyet newspaper reported this and this speech was not refuted. We also reported these to the ECHR. Turkey's Constitutional Court might give right rulings about the freedom of expression, assembly, and demonstration rights but it cannot give right ruling about this issue. The ECHR is also in the same position. The Council of Europe does not want to take responsibility on this issue, as its political side is dominant.

Let me make mention of what we call restorative justice. There are three topics in this subject: recognition, compensation and land. Now there is no land issue in this matter. One must, firstly, recognize the issue. The way to relieve the victimization is compensation. About the Armenian Genocide we said: "Naturalize and recompense those who want to return back." Let us say someone returns and finds his land. Calculate the land's value and if that person is willing to sell it, buy it. But you can do this by naturalizing first. However, as time passes by, you cannot convince the public anyway. So, we must start at some point and the solution of this issue is recognition and compensation. The solutions for these issues have always been like this in the world. They say "land" and scare the citizen, "They will come and seize your land." When things are put in this way, no one confronts it anyway and everyone will stay away. As far as I remember, there is no precedent in the world. Process progresses usually by apology and compensation if there is a living heir.

Some of the cases filed in the US have been won. Currently Turkish lawyers are identifying lands that are registered to Armenian people by various foundations or public purse. They find living heirs, if any, and find them in America, Canada, Europe and get a power of attorney from them. Then they return and sue out here. Only, if they are registered in the name of the public purse or certain foundations, they do this. But they are still trying the legal remedy. A court from Turkey will give this ruling.

The first issue concerning relations with migration offices is the human rights environment in Turkey. Firstly, does the torture and ill treatment continue? Are political and fundamental rights guaranteed? Because if a person applies and there are no human rights violations in his/her country, that application will be rejected, but if the violations continue, this is the first stage. Sometimes they ask us about specific cases from abroad. A person applied to us. Our criterion is very clear in this issue: "If he has not committed a crime against humanity, then accept it." There are some soldiers, police officers, and intelligence officers involved in crimes against humanity. We say: "We cannot detect them." How will we detect? How will you identify a soldier involved in the massacre? We do not have those tools. We say, "You are a huge country, you have intelligence, search it." This is the principle, and you should know this principle too. If somebody from Turkey is involved in the massacre, his organization is defeated after the coup attempt; then he escaped and took refuge to your country, then you must examine that person's conditions. You will not admit that person if he has committed a serious crime here, it is that simple.

For example, Germany's treatment of those involved in the Sivas Massacre. Germany had alleged for years: "There is aggravated life imprisonment in Turkey. For this reason, we cannot extradite them to Turkey." However, a bilateral inter-state agreement could be signed, and these criminals' conditions could be assured. Even ECHR has now given new rulings. It wants for those who have been sentenced to heavy life imprisonment to be given a day for conditional release. This invalidates Germany's justification.

These types of issues are sensitive issues, but they are important in general. Our views and reports on this subject are always referenced. They do not have any other sources of reference anyway. Recently, even some economic institutions have begun to ask our opinion. It does not bode well. Even there are people from huge economic institutions around the world who ask, "Is it safe to invest to Turkey? We say: "If you can fix the Kurdish issue, invest. Otherwise do not." Our answer is also very clear. If you do not fix it, it means constant war.

Participant: *Contemporary Lawyers Firm. As you know, they are going through a difficult process. Maybe I could not follow about this, but at least there is no sound wave hitting our ears. Do you have practices for this issue? These friends were doing very serious work for Turkey's opposition. I have the thought that there is silence on this issue. Have you had any special activity as İHD?*

They are our friends. It does not appear in the mainstream media as there is a complete blackout, but we pursue their cases, report and monitor their situations. There are not many people on that issue anyway. There is Contemporary Lawyers, Free Lawyers Association, and there are lawyers from İHD. These are the remaining ones, anyway. We made a special report activity about them: "Judicial Reports About Lawyers Under Pressure in Turkey." We also translated this report into English and sent it to the relevant organizations. These cases are pursued closely, but we are all weak at the point of creating public pressure, because everyone is under judicial pressure. But maybe we can discuss it. For example, we can ask, "How can we organize a better campaign about this; what are the handicaps?" and discuss these questions. Both in Turkey and out of Turkey campaigns are organized for Osman Kavala but they have no effect. Because there is a government that is not affected.

Contemporary Lawyers are advocating the common people and their role in the Soma Massacre is very important. It is known that they did important things in the same way about those who lost their lives in Çorlu train accident. In many other social incidents, they carried out important activities that disturbed the government. I never forget; we went to Soma when Soma Massacre happened. Selçuk Kozağaçlı and his friends were also there. The police did not do anything. Just as we left the city, they immediately detained them. We had to return. A lot of fighting and fighting... The state is a very strange thing. The state was very uncomfortable in the Soma incident. The main reason is social cause advocacy. I do not think there is any other reason.

What can one do in the case of torture, special investigation procedures, and certain investigative procedures? How can one bother the prosecutor, how long can one make a petition without getting tired? They did it to intimidate the lawyers who could do this. They have now preferred to push lawyers around as the first way to mute the public. In this respect, the assassination of Tahir Elçi is also an assassination of this nature. We treated the issue within ourselves. We know why and who did it. This event is clear in our minds, there is not much to discuss. On that side, the judiciary intimidates lawyers who work as lawyers of social causes and they are trying to prevent the people from pursuing their rights. All this is done for this purpose. There is a mind that does this.

We continue this struggle against this mind uninterruptedly. On the one hand, lawyers have a serious problem. The number of lawyers detained and arrested within the scope of the investigation of Fethullah Gülen organization

has exceeded hundreds. Those whose detentions continue are less in number. The number of lawsuits filed against lawyers dealing with all these cases and investigations in our community has exceeded eighty. The number of lawyers on trial in that case is around three hundred. The number of detained lawyers varies but has never been below twenty. They keep going.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERMEDIATION AND FACILITATION

Şah İsmail Bedirhanoglu

Mediation takes place in almost every conflict zone. Most of us have followed that mediation or intermediacy has a significant effect on conflict resolution in South Africa, Ireland, Colombia or any other place where conflict has recently resulted in peace. We can easily see the importance of mediation in these cases.

Even people having blood feuds in the regions where we live, did not want to come together and make peace. Certain people or families who are deemed trustworthy by both parties had to have intervened. These conflicts, which we frequently encountered in our immediate circle, have resulted in peace.

Especially in conflicts between organizations and states, meetings have been held with mediators, directly or indirectly, in one way or another. After the interviews, in some cases parties immediately started a dialogue, sometimes this took a long time, sometimes it happened quickly, and in some cases conflict resurfaced. In other cases, these negotiations failed. But at least in places where I have stated, these meetings have resulted in peace.

The meetings in Ireland actually started when Bill Clinton came to power - Irish were lucky that the Clinton family was of Irish origin - and positioned CIA as an intermediary. The CIA starts the process by having meetings with both IRA guerrillas and the British Prime Minister Tony Blair. These negotiations can result in peace, especially with the presence of determined leaders who can take risks. The process, which started with negotiations between the Tony Blair government and the IRA guerrilla leaders, with the support of Clinton, resulted in peace at the end. Jonathan Powell, chief advisor to Tony Blair, who was previously invited by DİSA to Diyarbakır, had an important role in these meetings.

In South Africa, the process runs through Mandela. There are also similar aspects to our case, like Mandela being in prison. The process in South Africa started with the mediation of some businesspeople and non-governmental organizations and then continued with Mandela meeting De Klerk's administration directly. Mandela resumed these peace talks with determination, despite the risk of his organization declaring himself a traitor.

In Colombia, there was a conflict that lasted for half a century. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives. However, the fact that there was a determined and risk-taking leader like the Colombian President Santos has been effective in the success of this process. There is a peace process in Colombia initiated through a childhood friend of the leader of the FARC movement, a businessman. This process eventually resulted in peace. (Though recently some commanders of the FARC made a statement that they will restart the armed struggle. Now it seems very unlikely for this initiative to gain social support considering FARC ran in the election. In the democratic election, FARC did not achieve desired success. There is such an aspect to the issue. There are important differences between guerilla struggles and politics. You may conduct a very successful armed struggle, but when you go into the field, or when you go into politics, you may not be that successful.

We are still living in a period of violence in Turkey, starting with the arming of PKK in 1983. In Turkey and especially in our region, even though we don't have exact numbers we are going through a process of clashes resulting in deaths of approximately fifty thousand people. Some meetings were held on this now and then. Especially during Özal's period - I'll tell you in a bit - my friend Cengiz Çandar was the mediator in our case. Özal was also able to make an impression of a determined leader who could take risks. However, the situation within the state itself was not ready, and the international conjuncture was not suitable for it. At the end, this process was interrupted with the death of Özal. Everyone thought Özal's death wasn't a coincidence.

The Kurdish problem takes Turkey's domestic politics, foreign policy, social and economic life and politics hostage, and mortgages the future of people living in Turkey.

After Özal, there have been initiatives by Erbakan. They also were pretty weak. Each leader that came to power in Turkey tried to figure out how to solve this problem. Some thought military operations were the solution; as in continuing the struggle until there is no member of the organization left, some thought dialogue was the solution. All leaders must have thought, "How can I solve this problem with a project that can end clashes?" But the political atmosphere in the country and international developments can push politics and politicians in a different direction and lead them to a different point.

After AKP came to power - especially after 2004 - Erdoğan took some of the suggestions he received on this issue into consideration. One of these suggestions was made in 2005. In early 2005, a group of intellectuals visited

Erdoğan and asked him to deliver an important message on his way to Diyarbakir that he would solve this problem. When Erdoğan came to Diyarbakir in 2005, he made a speech that started with the sentence “The Kurdish problem is my problem” and started a process. It was actually a process that had a background. It wasn’t just a sentence said in a housing estate in Diyarbakir.

A series of meetings and discussions were held in the background. However, back then AKP was a ruling partner with the congregation now called FETÖ. During that period, the congregation had a suggestion and they said to Erdoğan: “Let’s follow such a way in the Kurdish issue; Let’s both maintain military operations and neutralize politicians, make them ineffective so to speak - most of them already commit crimes with their statements, evaluations and actions - but at the same time let’s meet some of the democratic demands of the Kurds.” Erdoğan then reviewed this suggestion with his colleagues - Efkân Ala, who used to be the governor of Diyarbakir and was the undersecretary of the prime ministry at the time, Yalçın Akdoğan and Hakan Fidan. They say: “We could do that but cases throughout the world have shown us that you need to have meetings with whom you are fighting. The British also have a suggestion for us on this matter. “The suggestion of his colleagues seems more reasonable to Erdoğan; he follows that suggestion and the Oslo Process begins.”

State officials and PKK administrators sit side by side like the way we sit. The negotiations begin. It is called the Oslo Process because the first meeting takes place in Oslo. Later on, negotiations continue in Berlin and London. They mainly continue in Sulaymaniyah and nearly seventeen meetings are held. During these meetings, the congregation known as FETÖ is very influential on the state, on the intelligence and on the police force. The congregation has access to all the main points and information discussed in the meetings. After these negotiations failed, as you may have noticed, neither PKK nor the state made any accusations against the other party regarding the content of these meetings. After all, someone deciphered these conversations. Actually, both sides knew who had deciphered them, but the state knew it better.

Then suddenly there is a big operation to arrest people in Diyarbakir. Remember, the process starts to get complicated when the photos of many people handcuffed are presented to the public within the scope of the KCK Operation. These negotiations fail. But Sabri Ok, Mustafa Karasu and Zübeyir Aydar, who resume the meetings on the PKK side, have another meeting and say: “On the one hand, you are having meetings with us, but on the other hand you are putting our friends in jail.” Later on, Sabri Ok himself tells this. Hakan

Fidan says: "Those who act this way are the ones who want you to end the meetings." The PKK side wouldn't believe this, of course. The Habur Process was also interrupted during the negotiations.

When observed, we see that both sides seriously sabotaged the meetings. Solving such an important issue would lead Erdoğan to have a major political charisma in Turkey. However, the congregation didn't desire this then. In the same period, there was an operation where a group of soldiers were "sent to die" in Silvan. If I'm not mistaken, twenty-two soldiers died. Then the number of clashes increased, they were significant clashes; 980 people lost their lives in the clashes that took place between 2011 and 2013 Newroz. When we look at Ireland, 900 people died in such huge clashes that lasted that long.

The Roboski incident occurred in December 2015. AKP and Erdoğan believe they have been set up regarding the Roboski incident. There is some truth to it. State intelligence and some international intelligence circles provided information to the government at the time. There was intelligence that Bahoz Erdal will enter the country with a group of armed militants and run important operations, and they kept receiving this intelligence. At that time, Bahoz Erdal appeared in the Turkish press as a person responsible for many operations. It was thought that capturing and killing such a person during clashes would provide great moral and psychological superiority. This intelligence information was so inflated. One night, it was conveyed that a group of armed people approached the border and with the common knowledge of both the Americans and the Turkish Herons, the instructions were given to "do what was necessary."

I see the Roboski incident as the 9/11 of the Kurds. The Kurds did not go out on the streets to protest or didn't take any action. However, it led to a significant breakdown in the entire Kurdish society. In fact, this is a period where the willingness to cohabitate is damaged and trust between societies is weakened. The government has also felt this breakdown. During this period, a friend of mine, a businessman, called me. He said that someone from Ankara wanted to meet me. I think it was September 2012. I met Yalçın Akdoğan for lunch. He asked my opinion on the subject. I'm generally an optimistic person but for the first time I expressed my thoughts that the country could be divided. He said he and the government agreed.

The following day we had a meeting with Beşir Atalay that lasted an hour and thirty minutes. The conclusion I drew from that meeting is this: the state had initiated the İmralı Process and they reached a result while we were holding

these meetings. At the time, dialogue was cut off in democratic politics. The BDP and the government were lashing out at each other. "Do you have a dialogue with them?" I asked. He said that they had no dialogue with either the BDP or the organization. At this point, he stated that the support of non-governmental organizations in the region was needed. I replied, "We cannot know the agenda of the state or the organization. We are a non-governmental organization. If we can make a contribution to end the conflict, we will."

There are two parties to this conflict, and both parties must approve of such an effort for a contribution to be made. Obviously the state was prepared beforehand, they had done their homework. In Diyarbakir, we had a meeting with Selahattin Demirtaş and Gültan Kışanak who were co-chairs back then.

We started it with Emin Aktar, the president of the Bar Association. We formed a committee with former MAZLUMDER chairman Yılmaz Ensaroglu - a conservative who also worked in İHD - former ambassador Akın Olcer, Cengiz Çandar, Osman Kavala, Avni Özgürel and Bekir Ağırdir. Both Selahattin Demirtaş and Beşir Atalay told us that they approve of this effort. However, both parties said that there were people who should not be in this committee and that these people should not be included, and the process began.

Mediation is both a difficult and a risky job. There is a high risk of both parties misunderstanding you. Of course, you may have a certain view regarding daily political events. You may have a political and mental foundation on clashes and the Kurdish issue. The critical thing is to be freed from them as much as possible - this is valid for everyone - to understand and empathize with both parties. If you do this, your chances of success are high. But if you cannot, all parties will immediately eliminate you. I have explained this so that you can comprehend an incident that our committee experienced better, I will elaborate later.

This is the summary of what had happened between BDP and the government. It was also necessary to establish a dialogue between the government and the CHP. Beşir Atalay also emphasized this and said that they should definitely meet Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu. Because the attitude adopted by Deniz Baykal during the Habur process was very effective in the failure of this process. Deniz Baykal made a scene, indeed. He was one of the actors who terminated the process. Beşir Atalay stated that if CHP opposed it, they would have a hard time conducting such a process. An unannounced meeting was held with Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu in Istanbul. Then a public meeting was held. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu took the podium and said: "Whatever Erdoğan wants to do, what-

ever he wants to start, we support him.” Then Erdoğan said, “Who are you to support me?” Although Kılıçdaroğlu was persuaded, things got complicated again with Erdoğan’s statement. The recovery of that process was difficult. At the time, Avni Özgürel and Yılmaz Ensaroğlu were the most important actors preventing Kılıçdaroğlu’s withdrawal of support for the process.

The İmralı Process developed very quickly in 2012. Now, they moved on to the phase of what Öcalan’s letter’s content would be, which was announced to the public in 2013 Newroz. The developments were so fast. The state, BDP and PKK were having negotiations through BDP politicians. I think the government wanted to reaffirm the negotiations that took place with BDP through us. The state was concerned that when BDP would convey their message or their letter they would change the content of it or not deliver it at all. That’s why they wanted us to convey the same message to the organization.

The state was conducting a calculated work. At least the negotiations were almost risk-free. The Kurdish political movement wasn’t as prepared. Maybe they didn’t expect such a process. This is valid for both BDP and PKK. After all, we are talking about important names who have been fighting a war for the past thirty years.

They have fought for thirty years; thousands of people have been killed. In such a war, it is normal for the parties not to trust each other. There was a tremendous lack of trust between the organization and the state. The organization felt like any communication, development or message was a conspiracy against the organization; they thought they were going to be purged. This led to paranoia and prevented good politics.

In 2013, Abdullah Öcalan’s letter read on Newroz perplexed everyone. The organization was baffled. The ending of the armed era and the beginning of the era of democratic politics was the main point of the letter. After the letter, we crossed to the other side of Habur with a committee at the request of the government. After the letter, BDP delegation was gone. I think Sırrı Süreyya Önder, Selahattin Demirtaş and another group were there. We saw that people were anxious about what was going to happen.

The most important thing that I will tell you is this: If you are for peace and making an effort in this regard, it is necessary to reduce the unease the parties feel towards each other, not to increase them. For example, if there is a tension between the organization and Öcalan - and there was - it is important to reduce this tension and not increase it. After Öcalan’s letter, the clashes

stopped and a ceasefire was declared. Then, the retreat of the organization was brought to the agenda.

As a Kurd, you may think that the bar for the negotiations initiated by Öcalan in İmralı is very low. Let's say I agree with that. But it wouldn't be right for me to take steps to determine the direction of the talks just because I think that way. The meetings continue and the responsibility in these meetings belongs to PKK and the state. The mediators' responsibility is to execute mediation in the best possible way.

Our committee knew the content of Öcalan's letter. After Öcalan and Hakan Fidan completed the draft agreement consisting of eleven articles, Öcalan made a statement like, "If Erdoğan does this, we will support his presidency." They expressed this to our group at a meeting. I quoted Öcalan's words, "If Erdoğan does this, we will support his presidency." There was a lot of objection, especially from Turkish intellectual circles. Then some members of the committee wrote a letter on their behalf and gave the letter to Sırrı Süreyya Önder to be forwarded to Öcalan. The content of the letter is as follows: "The meetings you conduct are valuable and important. But we do not support Erdoğan's presidency, you do not make such a promise." The letter is given to Sırrı Süreyya Önder. That week, Selahattin Demirtaş goes to the meeting instead of Önder. Upon this, Önder shares the situation with Demirtaş and says: «I have the letter, this is the content of the letter, tell Öcalan.» Demirtaş conveys the content of the letter to Öcalan. Interviews with Öcalan are recorded both in writing and in video. It was Demirtaş's last meeting with Öcalan. Öcalan determines who will go to İmralı, but ultimately the state makes the final decision.

Demirtaş says: "I was going to bring a letter, but Sırrı Süreyya has it. It is said that Turkish intellectuals have such a concern.» Öcalan makes an important remark that I also agree with. "I know the work of those friends; I find them valuable and I congratulate them. I respect all of them, but it wouldn't be right for them to take a position that will affect the course of these negotiations." He has a critical point of view.

This has a shocking effect on the state. In a sense, some members of a committee claiming to be independent and impartial are trying to influence the most important actor who will determine the direction of the negotiations. As of that day, the function of our committee had ended in the eye of the government. Later on, we gathered as the committee and argued harshly. Although our committee continued its work afterwards, we lost the government's trust.

As I mentioned before, the Kurdish political movement had limited preparation for the process. There are two main critical thresholds in these processes. The first one is “language and style,” the second is “reassuring steps”. As for language and style, I must admit that the government was very good. Columnists and political actors were making statements every day. It was Yalçın Akdoğan who appeared on TV and said “Öcalan is the greatest philosopher of our age.” At that time, harsh statements were constantly made by both BDP and PKK. Their style was very harsh, “We don’t trust them, and we don’t believe them.”

In terms of “reassuring steps”, the government didn’t make any effort. The government didn’t want to take any steps, even in the issue of sick prisoners, which we have mentioned many times. The state had a problem of turning every position into a bargain. AKP and Erdoğan didn’t start this process just to distract or waste time. However, they did not see the historical depth and difficulties of the Kurdish issue at all, they thought they could “solve it in a few months.” What is going to happen? “Öcalan will make a call, the guerrillas will come and surrender with their weapons, and we will pass a law and release them. We will live together in peace. We will make some legal regulations and constitutional changes regarding the Kurdish language and culture and end the process.” They had a tendency to “close the deal in the cheapest way.” On the other hand, the Kurdish political movement didn’t have any preparation regarding where to start.

A strong mediation could not be fully formed for either side. The formation and operation of our committee was very good. The committee lost its function to a large extent when some members of the committee took a different stance. There was no one else who could understand both parties at that time.

The Solution Process did not have international support either. Erdoğan and his circle saw this as a national project. We cannot say that the West supported the process very much at the time. Regional actors also did not want the peace process. Iran wanted PKK and Turkey to fight, not compromise, they still do. In this respect, AKP administrators could not see the challenges of the process very well. I’m not saying that, “We saw it well, we had the insight to analyze and predict well, but they didn’t.” During those days, AKP members had way too much self-confidence.

But before the process started, the government front had done tremendous engineering work. Bülent Arınç made the following statement: “Actually, Öcalan is a very good man. One day, the head of the Central Bank said

to me: 'We attended the same school. He was actually going to the mosque that day and he did not come. He would be a good Muslim if he had gone to the mosque.' Bülent Arıç, columnists, politicians, many powerful writers who carried out all the theoretical studies and public relations campaigns of AKP started to accredit Öcalan, because the state had introduced him to the public as the "head of terrorists" and "baby killer" for a long time. They first demonized Öcalan and now they were trying to present him as a good man again. Such an engineering work to be carried out on Öcalan had its challenges. The state has succeeded to some extent. Erdoğan used his strong leadership in this matter. He sent the following message to his voters: "Don't worry, I'll do good things, trust me!"

These meetings were full of dilemmas. Personally, I wouldn't have guessed that there would be more clashes after this process has started. When I was asked about this on TV, I said, "They wouldn't go back to a period of heavy clashes," not just to satisfy the public, but because I personally believed in it. My views lasted until the American Ambassador Ricciardone visited Diyarbakır. It was right after Öcalan's second letter. That night, he had a meeting with the business community and non-governmental organizations in Diyarbakır. When I asked him "What do you think about the Solution Process?" - he spoke Turkish too - he made an analysis. "Turkey is one of our important allies. We stand by and support all the efforts Turkey makes to preserve the inner peace and stability of everyone." At the end of our conversation he said, "I would like to be as optimistic as you." When I heard this, I felt that the Solution Process could go through a rough time.

To what extent were mediators and actors elsewhere free of their own emotions? We know that there are important cases on this matter. One of them is Jonathan Powell, who took part in the Northern Ireland process. Powell's father was killed by IRA guerrillas during a bombing and he was also an advisor. The night he meets the IRA guerrillas with Tony Blair, the prime minister shakes the guerrillas' hands, but he does not want to. He doesn't shake their hands because he encounters the men he saw as the ones who killed his father. But afterwards, he was freed from all these emotions and became one of the most important actors who carried out these processes in the best way. He did not say, "These men killed my father; I shouldn't be side by side with them." He also came to Diyarbakır several times and shared his experiences with us. He is an important person who goes to different parts of the world and gives lectures.

As I said, mediation is a difficult issue. As a Kurd, I did politics. I have also been in non-governmental organizations. When I look at the content of the

meetings Abdullah Öcalan conducted in İmralı, the demands he expressed have never satisfied me as a Kurd. But my first reference in mediation was this: Let these clashes end; stop these deaths. If the Kurds are to be successful in democratic politics, they should come out on the field today and do politics without weapons. They should campaign in the best way to claim their rights originating from being a nation. That's the main point. Discussions such as "Öcalan wanted this, he did not want that, he should have asked for more, he was deceived by the state..." are of no use. The important thing in this process was accepting even just a single item - if both Öcalan and we had signed it - ending these clashes and avoiding these deaths.

Nearly six thousand people were killed after 2013. It may be more, but neither the PKK, government, AKP nor HDP know the exact figures. No non-governmental organization knows the exact number either.

Many people died in the ditches. I wish the process at least resulted in a decision to end clashes. Maybe things would be different. Political foresight is a special skill; to be able to see these events and risks. Unfortunately, neither AKP and the state nor HDP and PKK could see much.

Let me finally tell you this: The public knows me. I have never sided with either HDP or AKP. However, as a Kurd, I tried to support the Kurdish struggle, the struggle to claim the rights of Kurds on every platform. During the process I always criticized Öcalan, but throughout all this political process, I thought of him as a person with foresight.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *The meetings first started in 1993. Then they continued from 2008. There is a gap in between. There is the İmralı Process between 1999 and 2004. With the process that began in 1999 two peace groups, one from the mountains and one from Europe, came to Turkey with Öcalan's call. What Öcalan said at that time was: "They will come, they will be released after a short trial, and then you will go and bring another thousand people." I felt the need to tell you this particularly to emphasize the negative role of the Gülen community in peace initiatives. Then the peace groups arrived. Van State Security Court took a very harsh approach. They said, "Either you will confess and benefit from the Law of Repentance, or we will charge you with the maximum sentence." Ultimately, they were charged with the maximum sentence. That process was interrupted. After that period, Öcalan drew attention to the negative role of the congregation very clearly for the*

first time. I think he said to Erdoğan in 2004: "Tell him, this congregation is surrounding him." Let me add that too.

Participant: *The following course of events had been negative. What kind of a committee structure could help you to overcome such crises? At the beginning, you probably determined various principles on how the committee would function. Then some members prepare a letter and - maybe they are not trying to prevent the mediation process, but - they get involved in an issue that they should not interfere with. What kind of suggestions would you have for the establishment of a similar committee today? What kind of a committee would you like it to be? Also, the committee seems to consist of mostly men. I don't know how many women there were, but would it have been possible then to get names from initiatives like the Women for Peace Initiative? My third question is this: You said that the Kurdish side was caught off guard. On the one hand, there is the state, the state's institutions, officials, money and resources. They can do research on this subject as much as they want and not declare anything, they can put it aside for later use. When necessary, they can implement it, make their diplomats work on the case, collect information, etc. On the other hand, there is the Kurdish side trying to manage the contribution of volunteers and members, perhaps with the contribution of democratic non-governmental organizations, at least in civil politics. In fact, the conditions were not equal and maybe the Kurdish side didn't have the opportunities to be prepared at that time. Suddenly they had to go through an intensive learning process. But they couldn't finish on time because the process was moving fast. So maybe it was the Kurdish side that was at a disadvantage, but if they wanted to, if they could have been prepared beforehand, the process could be running differently. I was wondering about your comments on this subject.*

The state has institutions. They benefit from think tanks, academia, diplomats and the world. If nothing else, there is a tremendous intelligence service. It's in contact with other countries' intelligence services; it can monitor and see all activities. Yes, there is a great inequality in this regard. However, we were a little surprised when we didn't see the performance we expected from an organization that has fought for nearly thirty years; it is one of the most powerful organizations in the world, became organized internationally, and has representative agencies similar to embassies all over the world. They were very unprepared.

To reply to the question about the committee, I can say the following: Upon the request of Beşir Atalay who said, "Include everyone and contribute to the

process, this is what we expect from you,” the committee emerged through our meeting with Selahattin Demirtaş and Gültan Kışanak. We have taken into account the preferences of both sides, when they asked us to not include certain people in the committee. Maybe we were inexperienced too; we were moving along with our predictions and instincts.

As for the woman issue, there were a few women. There were also women from the conservative community. Yes, women were few in number, but they existed. Neither side wanted people whose political engagement and political identity was too prominent. While setting up the committee, we had basic criteria: Diversity and representation. There are many groups: Kurds, Turkish intellectuals, rightists, leftists, conservatives and women. We tried to create a diverse composition. Of course, we preferred to select people who had made an effort to contribute to peace and had ideas and a history in this regard.

As I said before, when some members of the delegation hastily took a stance on the presidential system and Erdoğan’s presidency, the committee’s reliability before the state was damaged. Later, our activities continued, some work was done in a limited scope. But this committee could have been much more effective. For example, it was this committee that proposed the “Wise People” idea to the government. We suggested that there should be twelve people, they increased the number to sixty-three. It was also this committee that suggested having a Monitoring Board. Maybe the committee could have contributed more to the solution of the problem, had it not taken such a position on the subject I mentioned. Sometimes such mistakes happen.

Participant: *I studied diplomacy, international relations. Therefore, I have a conceptual background on interstate negotiations and conflict management, and I have done some reading in history. Diplomacy and conflict resolution depend on certain stipulations. But above all, power determines the positions in diplomacy. In other words, international agreements are made with the power of the state that wins the war. Thus, conflicts are eliminated, and a new process starts.*

Today is the last day of the Peace School. We are talking about peace. We are talking more about social mediation and social conflicts. But since the past, I have faced such a handicap in all sessions. As if a solution to a conflict between two state powers is being sought. Your position is somewhat unauthorized, positioned on delivering letters and of interstate negotiations. However, you are an intellectual, a social pioneer, an investor and you are from Kurdistan. This is the profile of all intellectuals involved in such mediation activities.

In summary, there must be a spirit in social conflicts; there must be peace. We can take a look at how this issue is handled in the Qur'an. I remember a sentence about conflict: "If two parties are in conflict, choose the right party," says Qur'an, it doesn't say "Mediate." In our society and in all societies that's the rule on fights between siblings, the society gathers accordingly. Here, an arbitrator, an authority comes into question to give back the rights of the right party. This is often what we understand from mediation as a society. All my observations and independent readings on the process show that this is the biggest handicap.

The government displayed a behavior that was incompatible with the morals and spirit of peace, positioning itself on Erdoğan's presidency axis. This was the biggest reason why the process was interrupted after they lost the election in June. Worrying that he would lose power, Erdoğan ended the process. That's the prevalent view in society. PKK may have many similar mistakes and behavior.

Shouldn't the Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals be more courageous and determined? Can you really see any hope for solving the problem without such moral authority in the next conflict resolution? Because Erdoğan will be replaced with someone else and then we will be talking about that person's interests. This is what I think as a young citizen. That's why I don't approve of mediation activities; I am quite distant to it. I want to start a discussion on this topic. Perhaps your observations will help us examine this section more.

If only we could have such a strong position like you said where we would have an effect on both parties; like standing with the right party, whom might this position belong to? This position may belong to a powerful state in the world. A committee like us standing in such a position didn't really have a chance to say, "You are wrong, the Kurds are right!" to the ruling power with the motivation of standing with the right party. By taking such an attitude, we could not make a contribution. Then we would be one of the many non-governmental organizations that stand by the Kurdish political movement.

We all have an idea about where the issue started and ended. Of course, our role was not limited to just delivering letters, it wasn't set up like that. I was just talking about a scene. The committee took many actions that I couldn't convey to you here.

Let me remind you of one of the most significant things that was done. There were hunger strikes in 2012. Hunger strikes in prisons started with the

demand for education in the mother tongue. They started with a demand difficult to meet that would require a constitutional change, a radical change in Turkey's education system. The hunger strikes ended with the efforts of the committee. The government side was also hesitant without a solution. Since the initiators kept the bar very high, it was a process with a no clear end date. Emin Aktar, the president of the Diyarbakır Bar Association of the time, had important contributions, we all did. This process was completed with the practical solutions and approaches of the Minister of Justice of the time, Sadullah Ergin.

The issue of standing by the right party was not in line with the committee's position. Then we would take a different position and do politics.

If I'm not mistaken, you stated that a mediation effort like the one we made wouldn't make any significant contribution. I don't agree with that. I'm not just saying that in regard to our small effort. At the beginning of the speech I gave many examples from around the world. Such mediation activities are always needed. Look, before the process begins, Santos, who was elected president in Colombia, invites a businessman who was the childhood friend of the FARC leader, and they spend two days together talking about how they can solve this issue. His friend is a businessman, but his relationship with the FARC leader continues, they are negotiating. The president also knows. The work is carried out this way and then different non-governmental organizations get involved. Ultimately, the first spark is created through that childhood friend. The negotiations are somehow conducted through the mediators.

Parties have never said, in anywhere, "We fought, we are tired, let's make peace." It wasn't said in this country either. Tribes in our region didn't say it. Neither two friends nor two siblings have said it. There must be someone present who has the potential to influence him or her.

But we were not a committee with the potential to influence the parties. We were a committee made up of many people with a past, who knew about the matter in one way or another and both parties trusted our judgment. The committee members consisted of people with different political tendencies. There was a common denominator, the cessation of clashes as soon as possible. In doing so, our main mission during the negotiations was to be a facilitator and encourage both parties to overcome challenges. That was our mission. In other words, it was to encourage them about peace and to reach a compromise between two parties who both have a very high demand bar. I wish we could be effective.

It is understandable that Erdoğan sees his political future as a priority. He is the leader of a political party. It is also normal for his party to want to regain power. As Tony Blair's administration continues having meetings with IRA, someone from the British press detects and deciphers the talks and tells Jonathan Powell, "I know what you are doing, and I will report it." The announcement of these would mean the end of Tony Blair's political career. But Tony Blair declares it himself before the journalist reports it as news. "We are having meetings," he says. In response to that, the Labor Party's vote rate drops to eighteen percent in polls. It's a political party in question, so Tony Blair is worried about what might happen. Consequently, it is understandable that political parties are having such concerns. But Erdoğan was too concerned about this.

Participant: *Have you been given any assurance? Perhaps it was said, "Everything will be done and discussed during the peace process and they won't be used against you as evidence." Have you not received any assurance against the injustice you are now being subjected to?*

No, we haven't, and we didn't demand it either, we didn't really think of it. There was another risk rather than a trial process. The Kurdish issue is a significant problem in Turkey. International actors, the western world, the USA, Russia and the actors in the region did not want such a solution process because Turkey is one of the most important and powerful countries in the region. A country that overcomes this problem will have more power to influence its environment and will have more military, political and economic capacity. When you look at it from the perspective of Iraq, Iran, and Syria, that is the case. A Turkey that ensures its own internal stability and peace is not desired. In this sense, the risk of members of the committee getting murdered is high because they are making an effort in this matter. Who is going to be held accountable if you get shot?

As a matter of fact, we did not think that one day we would be incriminated and go on trial, but it happened and we are upset, of course, we feel offended. It is a great misfortune that some of the contacts we made with the request and knowledge of the state are now elements that are incriminating us. But of course, if history repeats, we'll do it again. A legal regulation should be made regarding those involved in these processes. A legal regulation has been made on this issue, but only for intelligence officers and other government officials. Our file consists of files prepared in relation to DTK recordings between 2010 and 2014. It turned into a conspiracy case.

Participant: *Similar things happened to Osman Kavala and Selahattin Demirtaş. Cases are opened against them, not for the mediation process but for different reasons. There is no direct reference to this process.*

Another lawsuit was filed against me. This time it's about Gezi and Osman Kavala. Now, I'm banned from leaving the country.

Participant: *There is a book titled Conflict to Reconciliation: Theories, Processes and Practices compiled by Nimet Beriker. Beriker has an article on mediation there. This article talks about twenty-four different types of mediation models. It discusses different mediation models, from the form of mediation that only conveys information between the parties to the types in which United Nations intervenes by dispatching a peacekeeping force. I wanted to share it in case you are interested.*

There is no single form of mediation. It seems like two models have been implemented so far in our country. We know that an international committee took part in the Oslo Process as a mediator. In addition, the Solution Process was experienced more locally through the Contact and Dialogue Group. A committee consisting of local names was established and the state had met the organization through intermediaries and through this committee. They wanted to control the communication with the organization through a kind of dual mechanism.

As far as I remember, KCK requested for the US to be a mediator during the Solution Process. In the Oslo Process, an international organization - it was probably a non-governmental organization, not a state - then in the Solution Process, a committee consisting of local intellectuals participated as mediators. Later, KCK directly requested the US' mediation. Why did KCK demand the mediation of an imperial power such as the USA whereas before they agreed to have a mediation model consisting of local names, not having much power over the parties, facilitating, lightening the mood and improving the position of the parties? How did they get here?

I would like to share my views on several issues. First of all, I think it is necessary to shift from "normative approach" to "rational approach" in such matters. The issue shouldn't be about norms and values anymore, there should be a shift from "peace is good" to "peace is a need."

I want to remind you of the orange example. There are two children and they both want oranges. But there is only one orange. The mother must

meet the demands of both children. "What will you do with the orange?" she asks. One of the children says, "I want to drink orange juice." The other says he will make a cake. Thereupon, the mother squeezes the orange and gives the juice to one child and gives the remaining pulp to the other child so that he makes a cake.

The theory here is that the issue must be reconstructed in a way that "satisfies" both parties. If you construct the problem outside of the box, if you reframe the problem, and this new framework yields results for both parties, then you can progress. This is essentially the key point in mediation. There should be mediators who will reconstruct the issue in a way that will satisfy both parties and create a new framework. Maybe you can elaborate on this? How much could the committee you were part of succeed in this?

Secondly, there is a concept called the security dilemma in the conflict resolution literature. I think it was one of the main issues ignored in the Solution Process. The security dilemma focuses on how to ensure the security of the parties after having an agreement. This discussion is mainly for the organization. In summary, it is a theory that states "A mechanism must be built for the organization to sustain itself after the agreement. If this cannot be achieved, the organization won't be willing to make peace." You can't say "We made a deal; we will kill you," to these people. It is necessary to establish a structure and a mechanism where people can protect themselves and even continue to exist as a political actor if possible.

For example, the issue of disarmament of organizations in many peace processes is addressed together with the reform of the police force and the military structure. Sometimes insurgents join the new police force or army created after the reform at the local level. A quota can be allocated to the party established by the rebels in the parliament, as they did in Colombia. In summary, there is a need to build a "new mechanism where the organization can survive after the agreement." This can be ensured by a constitutional change, the establishment of a new political party or joining the army or police force.

I think the security dilemma issue applies to governments as well as rebel forces. We ignored this in the Solution Process. Why should Erdoğan continue to have negotiations if he will lose his power after the agreement? So, if you were not going to support his presidency, why would he talk to you, why would he carry out the process? Just as the organization wants to survive, and this is a reasonable demand, the same goes for the government.

If your interlocutor were going to lose politically, why would he carry out the process? You have to provide a framework in which both parties win, and I think that couldn't be achieved.

William Zartman, a prominent figure in conflict resolution, asks: "When do the parties come together to have negotiations?" There is a concept he developed on this subject: "mutually damaging predicament." The conflict comes to a dead-end and begins to hurt both parties. He sets this as a minimum requirement. Zartman says, "Unless they reach this point, it is impossible for the parties to start negotiating. But sometimes the parties do not start to negotiate even after they have reached that point. Because they don't realize it." At this point, the mediators can remind them that the current situation harms both sides and a mutual predicament is encountered. They can offer a new framework, as in the orange example. The role of mediators is sometimes to show this predicament to the parties and to find a new framework that will enable the parties to get out of this predicament.

Could a powerful actor like the USA, an actor with resources and sanction power over the parties be a mediator in the Kurdish issue? Is this a good mediator model? The Philippines is an example in this regard. They preferred to select their mediators from states that are distant to their case and have no interest in it. For example, the reason why Norway and Sweden stand out in so many cases is that they are small countries without imperial agendas. They are countries that have no political or financial interest in the conflict of the countries involved. The fact that the mediator is impartial and doesn't have any power over parties may also work out. The actor may be concerned: "They have ambitions and that could be bad for my interests." Strong actors may not be good mediators. I think that's how the USA's position is now. They got involved in Iraq. They have been directly involved in the Syrian crisis, physically and militarily. As in the Philippines example, when the mediator is "weak" and lacks the power to sanction over the parties, the mediation process can be more effective.

Coming back to my question, how did KCK come to a point where they wanted to have the US as a mediator? Do you have any information on this subject? In your opinion, can the USA be a mediator for the Kurdish issue?

Truth is, I have no information on this. Cemil Bayık stated this in two of his interviews. During the period the USA was mentioned, the Turkey-US relationship was in crisis.

The Kurdish issue is now a multi-dimensional issue with many elements and actors. There may always be a need for facilitating teams like ours on a local scale. We know Turkey and the organization well.

The US has a political, military and economic influence on both Turkey and the organization. Turkey has always been against the issue being moved into the international arena and the meddling of international actors. Since there was such a crisis in that period, Turkey didn't lean towards that idea.

They were inexperienced during the Oslo Process, but this process started within a good framework. The third group of actors was the British. The Norwegians had hosted it. The British joined the talks as mediators and facilitators. The British were already coming to Turkey and explaining the processes of Northern Ireland. Erdoğan's friends tell him that: "The British also have a suggestion for us on this issue." The proposal of the British is accepted, and the Oslo Process began.

The İmralı meetings were a little more private. There was an inequality created by Öcalan being a prisoner. The meetings were mostly held between Öcalan and intelligence officers.

The Turkish state always sees a risk of itself having to significantly compromise in the case of international actors meddling in this issue. "It's better to meet alone with the Kurds and not include a third party, I will take care of it." To be more precise, there is the approach of such "I will close the deal in the cheapest way and convince them." Since there is an approach like "I resolve it through Öcalan, if PKK causes any problems I manage it through operations or Öcalan," Turkey wouldn't accept US's interference on the subject. If we consider the Turkey-US relations in this period, the mediation of the US is a more difficult option.

Later, the government officials always said: "During the Oslo Process we have seen that international actors are preventing us from resolving this issue. That's why we will do it by ourselves." The state and AKP had this approach. I know that this approach is still highly adopted.

Participant: *You said that the Kurdish political movement was more unprepared. You said that they did not have any plans or projects on the subject. After all, we are not talking about a five to ten-year movement. It is a strong organization that has economic and military power and even a Kurdish diaspora as far as I can observe. This doesn't seem logical to me in that sense.*

Does the absence of any project, plan or route related to the process indicate that this organization is not aiming to resolve the issue?

No, I cannot draw such a conclusion. The organization was more unprepared. As the other participant has said, the state has a significant institutional structure, parliament, intelligence organization, and police force. It can benefit from many non-governmental organizations; it has academics and universities. The state has been thinking about this since 2005 and had a few experiences. That's when Oslo, Habur, national unity and solidarity, brotherhood projects were developed. While developing these, they were doing research and made important findings. The organization hadn't done any research yet during that period. At least we've seen that. They were running the process only on their concerns. They had worries, they were saying: "The state will deny us, they will destroy us, they will shut us down." It is understandable that they have such concerns; of course, they have been fighting for thirty years. The organization was not as prepared as the state. This was surprising for us.

Participant: *The organization kept the process very private; they did not share most information even with their own staff. The more they tried to keep it private, the more they excluded the Kurdish community. The concept of mediation was very important here. If the Kurdish movement had included some Kurdish figures, non-governmental organizations, the opinion leaders of this society, and some families in the process at that time, perhaps they could have had a stronger stance against the state. The solution process was kept very private by the state as well. The Kurdish movement was in a separate position from the Kurds. At that time, there were suggestions to invite former party members, opinion leaders, non-governmental organizations and Kurdish figures to contribute to the process. Suggestions were made to establish a platform that would strengthen the solution model. These recommendations were not taken seriously. As in AKP, concerns about the elections arose in the Kurdish political movement. Everyone also wanted to be a hero. I don't think that the Kurdish political movement thought about it in great detail. But I don't think the state had a solution model in mind either. Inevitably there is a huge trust issue between parties.*

Participant: *You said, "We made a proposal to establish a monitoring board at that time." If I'm not mistaken, you said that such a board was also formed. So, did that monitoring board carry out a study reporting the positions of the parties after the process resulted in a failure? Has a report been kept on which parties exhibited behavior that would be identified as positive or negative bias or sabotage? Secondly, is there a contact or dialogue at this*

stage? In other words, now is the time when everyone is drawn to their shells and perhaps when we need mediators the most. There have been between 6,000 to 11,000 casualties since 2015. The casualties in 2019 are not included. Are there such initiatives at this stage?

Participant: *You also mentioned this, when we look at the examples from around the world, in Colombia, in Africa, - of course it's more intense in Turkey - in all conflict processes the state is in a more advantageous position. These third parties see and approach the state that way. Therefore, they have a tendency to act in such a way, "Let's take a look at the state's demands and what kind of a process they will follow, then we will deal with you accordingly." Third parties generally behave this way. After the process progresses - it has also happened in Colombia - they try to have a balance to form the public part of it and focus on the wishes of the other party. Balance is attempted in this way.*

To me, the biggest reason for this failure in Turkey is the lack of active international mechanisms. For example, Norway had completely undertaken this process in Colombia; experts supported them. What we have is mostly third parties or mediators selected by the state. Let's talk about the Wise People. What was their role and mission?

Secondly, I want to ask this: What was the role of the women there? While the woman should play a bigger role in mediation, it seems that there are almost no women to undertake this directly.

Participant: *Turkey is a self-enclosed country and wanted to solve its own issue with internal mechanisms that are close to the state, which resulted in a handicap. The unpreparedness of the Kurdish political movement is understandable from one aspect. Because they did not take such a big step until that moment and suddenly they came across the process. It's the same with the elections. The government starts its preparation months in advance in accordance with its needs and suddenly says, "There is an election!" The other parties have no idea. You said, "Öcalan's statements were not at the expected level." What should it have been like so that this process could continue?*

I stated as follows: Although the bar for negotiations is low in the meetings initiated, I support this process even if I'm not satisfied with the demands. I stated that our personal views as mediators should not affect the course of the negotiation process. I also gave Öcalan credit for his foresight during the process.

When we look at the notes of the İmralı meetings, we see that both Öcalan and the state didn't want a mediator from outside. They say, "We'll solve it among ourselves." Therefore, with such an approach, you cannot expect another country to intervene on its own without a demand from the actors. That's not possible.

The Turkish state gained such an experience during the Oslo Process. Even though the experience itself wasn't that way, this is the conclusion the state drew. "When outsiders get involved, they don't understand us, they ruin the process. That's why we should solve this problem among ourselves with a process that is our own national project." The state worries that an effective third party involved may carry out more in-depth analysis of the process and this may be costly for the state so they avoid it. This is the background of the matter.

The other question was about the monitoring board. It remained only as an idea. Names were determined, but after the developments of Dolmabahçe Agreement, that process was over. Members of the monitoring board were selected but the rest did not work. My name was also among the names of the members. It is not just because of Erdogan, the Kurdish side did not support the Dolmabahçe process either. Neither side did.

"Are there any new developments?" The answer to this question is: There isn't any development that I know of but from the discussions I had with friends I understand that a solution doesn't exist right now. However, sometimes meetings are held with İmralı. A few months ago, there were diplomatic events initiated by James Jeffrey, an American diplomat. Jeffrey used to be an ambassador in Ankara, I know him well, and later he became an ambassador in Baghdad. Turkey actually took a position here. Turkey has made a policy change during that process. While Turkey was negotiating with the Syrian Democratic Forces indirectly before, Turkey started to have direct meetings with them just like during the Oslo Process. They had some suggestions. There was some progress. The meetings have ended but I don't know if they will start again.

All the meetings are about Syria. They start or don't start with Syria. Of course, if something good happens in Syria, it will also affect here. After all, the Solution Process was terminated because of the Syrian issue. When Kurds took a position in Syria in 2014, Turkey was concerned and worried. That's it. This issue was seen as a part of an international conspiracy, a project that would divide Turkey.

AKP staff, military staff and civilians, in short, the whole state saw this as a matter of survival: “They will divide our country, they will establish great Kurdistan with the support of the international community.” Iranians are also skilled in this regard. Turkey was already ready to buy into such a perception. We can’t really know if it was the right thing to do.

I think they thought: “If I can stop the developments in this process, I will live a little longer.” At this stage, PKK also acquired some positions over Syria. It started new relations in the international arena. Turkey was scared, concerned and saw this as a matter of survival. At that time, a series of meetings were held with Salih Muslim at MIT and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They tried to dominate the developments through Öcalan, but it didn’t work.

Turkey is still concerned about this. Not only AKP members are concerned but also military members, civilians and bureaucrats. They think the USA, their friend and ally for years, is the main actor.

In the backyards of the state, anti-Americanism and the perception that “these calamities are caused by US” is strong. Of course, this also affected the Solution Process and it was the development that terminated the Dolmabahçe Agreement.

I always say that the developments in Syria and the June 7 elections have destroyed the Solution Process, which already lacked international support. I hope there will be positive developments in the future.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERY: HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF TURKEY

Metin Bakkalcı

In conflict resolution and social peace, each citizen has a role to affect this resultant vector. Besides, each citizen has work to do with the organization they are part of. Moreover, the range of action of these organizations has a direct relationship with the range of action at the whole society level. As a result, we are all responsible for ensuring “conflict resolution and social peace building.” Here, THİV (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey) practice has been positioned under the title of “providing direct service” and this is understandable to a certain extent. But I would like to discuss our work, which is partly providing service, from a broader perspective.

As THİV, by discussing our experiences we will have the opportunity to confront ourselves. Within the scope of my presentation, I think it would be useful to mention the story of THİV first. In the second part, I want to share a little bit of our practice and its framework. In the third part, I will talk about our main subject. What we do is perceived as “providing direct service” in the DiSA Peace School program. This is an approach that we need to discuss. We work with people who have been tortured and subjected to human rights violations. But we do not consider this as “providing service;” we do not limit our work to that. I would like to discuss the issue of people being subjected to torture and the magic words and expressions that we use like holistic approach and its intertwined levels that support each other. In the final part, I will talk about “coping with ongoing social trauma” programs that occupy an important place in our field of work. I think this issue is strongly linked with conflict resolution and social peace building.

We have been using the following expression for THİV since day one: “Where there is pain and suffering, there is us.” This expression makes sense to us. We are where the pain and suffering is, every single day. THİV is actually a kind of social apology setting. It is like a platform to make an apology on behalf of society to those who have been subjected to violation and torture. Actually, what we do, rehabilitation - I will share the treatment and rehabilitation work for those who have been subjected to torture - is the condition of reparation itself, intrinsic to truth and justice. We have been paying attention to its co-

herence from the very beginning and our biggest dream is actually for the THIV to be faded and destroyed. This is the goal of THIV. Why is that? Because our main goal is to eliminate torture. We imagine ourselves as a platform strengthened by the dream of self-destruction.

Our story begins in 1980. I am 63 years old. People in my age group remember what happened many years ago as if it happened yesterday. I remember the morning of September 12, 1980. I remember before that, we have been through a lot. It's as if it's known and experienced by everyone but that's not the case. How great, our young friends, who have just started university, at the age of 18. In 1980, you may have read about the events that took place 39 years ago, maybe your family somehow told you about it. When we take a look at our field regarding the 12 September 1980 Military Coup, there is a short period of time. Let's please try to imagine an environment where approximately 650 thousand people were subjected to direct torture in 1980 when the population of the country was forty-five million.

I am a healthcare worker. When we consider that approximately one in seventy people, one in seventeen households, were affected by torture, we healthcare professionals call it a "public health problem." Why is this important? If we assume a problem belonging in the field of public health, specific programs are required from a healthcare perspective. Then again, every single person is important. Each person requires an individual program. Both torture and war are public healthcare problems. Therefore, specific programs are required.

This is how our story starts. There is a "Saturday Mothers" meeting in Istanbul. This mothers' issue is very significant. Back in 1980, some brilliant people were in prison and some of them were out. Essentially, the families and friends of the prisoners are the ones who ignited the most conscientious revolt against the brutal environment of September 12. In addition, many students and valued people of the time started a movement. We can say it happened towards the mid-1980s. There were similar developments in the world, and it was not so coincidental; practices for the prevention of torture and the treatment and rehabilitation of those who were tortured had begun to develop in Latin America in the 1970s and spread throughout the world in 1980. These needs started to emerge gradually. The paramedics started to come into contact with those who were subjected to torture. They started walking alongside those who were desperate and had broken souls. The needs were already there, and there were those who made an effort to satisfy those needs. There was an accumulation of knowledge building up

and as a result of the discussions within the Human Rights Association (İHD) and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB); the THİV was founded in 1990.

I would like to share a little about our practice and its framework: The main purpose of THİV is to contribute to the physical, mental and social well-being of those who are subjected to torture. This is our concern and our main activity that we try to realize in the light of our basic principles. As many other institutions, the effort made to achieve this is a voluntary one. Of course, there are people who work in our treatment centers with this voluntary effort. It is a professional service provided with a very widespread voluntary effort and with the voluntary contributions of the employees. It is a matter of knowledge, not of professionalism. There is a professional knowledge and service involved, and more importantly, human rights advocacy in general. I am one of those people who think that human rights advocacy should not be a separate field. "What do you do for a living?" "I am a human rights advocate." There is no such thing. I mean human rights advocacy is not a profession. What we call human rights advocacy is inherent to life. If all citizens of this country are equipped with human rights, they already have human rights advocacy inside themselves, or they should, period.

Of course, we try to reveal the wonderful merging of academic depth and an activist spirit through teamwork. Of course, as with all institutions, our work is based on our *raison d'être* and our core field of study. We make strategic plans. We prioritize treatment and rehabilitation efforts. Of course, this rehabilitation is inherent in the improvement process. We are fighting against impunity. Of course, we carry out actions to strengthen both our environment and ourselves. We don't just do that in Turkey, we do it internationally. Not only in Palestine and Israel, we carry out activities in our own field in a wide geography from Latin America to the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

The works we carry out are titled - primarily rehabilitation service - medical documentation, documentation of torture and serious human rights violations. We are not an organisation of law, but within the scope of a multi-disciplinary work based on our *raison d'être*, we also endeavor to strengthen the basis of working together with lawyers and to provide legal guidance. We continuously carry out actions such as occupational development studies, scientific studies, programs to cope with ongoing social trauma and the documentation of human rights violations. While doing these studies, we also carry out special studies to an extent depending on the obtained additional manpower and information, provided that our main field of work is further

strengthened within our means. We try to be prepared as much as possible for special situations such as clashes that have started after July 2015.

We have created the opportunity to contribute to the treatment process of over 17,000 people who have been subjected to torture. We have facilities in Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Diyarbakır and in Cizre since 2015 right after the clashes started as well as in Van since 2018. Diyarbakır and Istanbul are like headquarters in terms of their staff and network. Others are smaller facilities.

The workflow of a treatment center is as follows: The journey begins with the application of a person subjected to torture. First the interview and then the medical evaluation process is carried out. Diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, documentation and follow-up processes, including medical documentation, are planned and implemented with the evaluation of our colleagues who are experts in their field. Rehabilitation is a big deal. The process of reproducing knowledge is very valuable in itself. Therefore, we are doing some kind of scientific study scrupulously. This is a prerequisite to be able to do the job. In this sense, medicine is crucial. However, we are an institution that has made it a motto from the very beginning to not merely medicalize the rehabilitation processes of those who have been subjected to torture, and efforts to prevent torture.

Why are the mentioned scientific studies important? Sometimes, even if there is no visible trace, we can detect trauma scars by using methods for detecting torture marks, such as bone scintigraphy. Even after twenty-five years, we may have the opportunity to find these marks that are no longer visible. Sometimes electrical torture methods don't leave visible scars but we can detect them with histo-pathological examinations. These studies carried out by THIV are exemplary works that were referenced by the world.

There is a United Nations guide on preventing torture for healthcare professionals, lawyers and people dealing with human rights. It's a guide prepared by the UN to guide both the investigation and documentation processes when faced with torture. It's called Istanbul Protocol. It's not a coincidence because the last preparatory meeting was held in Istanbul in 1999. Even before the last meeting, Turkish delegations have been critical facilitators throughout the preparatory process. After the suffering of this country and the processes of being equipped with scientific knowledge, we held the last meeting with our important contributions. Adherence to Istanbul Protocol is evaluated in cases where allegations of torture are encountered, not just in Turkey but also

the world, from Europe to Asia, from Latin America to Australia, including the European Council and the ECHR.

On this journey that started with dealing with torture, we naturally improved ourselves in dealing with other violations that we call severe human rights violations. That's why we dream of establishing a Trauma and Human Rights Institute to make all these studies more qualified and systematic. We are in a hurry to realize this dream step by step.

You may be wondering about our financial resources. Volunteers' contribution is very important. Volunteer healthcare professionals provide at least one third of our total treatment expense items in kind. After all there is a very valuable contribution in kind. Of course, apart from that, it is necessary to mention the voluntary contribution of permanent employees. Because, for example, a physician working here with us has a much lower salary as you might expect than a physician working elsewhere. In addition to the contribution of our volunteers, there may also be financial contributions in various projects.

We say "We are not a project organization," but we do projects. Why? Projects are not the purpose; they are mainly facilitators. The issue is not the continuation of the projects, but the self-sustainability of the activity in order to meet the needs. This carries significant risks; in fact there are similar risks in Turkey and in the world. I would like to refer to it for that reason too. There is a risk of a human rights movement moving away from its nature and objectivity in such cases. This is also happening in the world. A professionalization situation may arise. Human rights advocacy can arise as a profession as well as in daily life. I wanted to share these to point out the risk of this being instrumentalized.

I'm moving on to the third part. I would like to share the issue of a person subjected to torture, the cohesion of a person subjected to torture that can be discussed in five intrinsic levels and five levels inherent to holistic approach in treatment and rehabilitation efforts towards a person subjected to torture. How is this holistic approach manifested, how is it realized? I want to shed light on this. For example, the word "victim" is used from time to time. It may be because of the word's English roots. But we would rather not use that word. We prefer to use the words "exposed" or "subjected;" because it is a state, the state of being exposed to something. We call it a person who is exposed to torture, who is subjected to torture.

Yes, we must always keep in mind that the person in question is a person equipped with rights. Otherwise, we may be causing dehumanization. In the basic dynamics of torture lies the definition of an “other,” moreover, the approach of treating this “other” as a threat, as an element that aims to eliminate their existence and therefore must be destroyed. It is an approach that enables you to see the enemy as a living creature that is completely stripped of its qualifications of being a human with rights. Today people are made to think in a certain way towards all other segments that they are not a part of. The mentality of “they are dangerous, moreover, they are enemies that will destroy us, therefore they and their children and families don’t have any rights” is being made dominant. In other words, it is a state of being ceased to be a person with human rights; it’s a process of dehumanization. There is such a thing as “the right to not be tortured” in the light of the principle that torture is absolutely prohibited. Therefore, a person who is tortured is actually a person whose right is violated. For any person whose rights are violated, there is a need for these rights to be restored and compensated. In this respect, this is not a service. It is an event that contributes to the process of restoring the rights of people whose rights have already been violated.

Secondly, in some conferences you hear people say: “Let a tortured person speak.” In other words, being subjected to torture begins to become an “attribute” of a person. However, he is a person, a person who has been tortured, a person who has been subjected to torture at some point of his life, he is a person who went through a negative experience. By negative I mean the traumatic process. All our lives consist of many experiences, a kind of a cluster of experiences, right? In other words, we engage in such a profession, we do such sports, we do such cultural activities, we have such losses, we have lost a family member, we have such experiences, some are painful, and some make us happy. Torture is of course a component in the very important cluster of our experiences. For this reason, we cannot freeze a person who experienced torture in that experience, in the richness of all his experiences. In other words, this definition should be avoided, since torture is not the only thing that person has experienced. When we freeze them in this negative experience, either on purpose or unwittingly, we cannot contribute to their recovery process and their coping with the experience, moreover, we can even harm them.

Thirdly, by saying “a person who has been subjected to torture,” we are talking about a person who has a physical, spiritual, social as well as political cohesion, right?

Fourth, unfortunately, this person subjected to torture may have experienced other grave human rights violations. He may have been forcibly displaced, have lost a loved one or his house may have been burned.

And fifth, torture is basically an attack aimed at destroying the self-respect of the individual, and at the same time it is a message to the whole society in order to suppress and silence. It's an action that gives the message of "I am powerful, you are nothing!"

Therefore, as a foundation, we have an approach of treatment and rehabilitation activities based on the cohesion of a person who has been subjected to torture, which can be handled at five intrinsic levels. This work is essentially a humanitarian aid, a humanitarian action, not a service. It is the journey of contributing to the restoration of a person's rights, whose rights have been violated. This is the way we think in a holistic approach.

Holistic approach should be handled within the scope of the right to remedy and reparation, which includes five elements of rehabilitation. As stated in the 3rd General Comment of the UN Committee Against Torture, the right to remedy and reparation consists of five inherent articles; the reclaiming of rights, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction and the right to know the truth, and the guarantee for non recurrence including the struggle against impunity. Therefore, in order for the rehabilitation process to succeed, we are trying to repair their physical injuries; we are trying to repair their damaged soul. But the soul can only be repaired if this environment can be created. Of course, our focus is here and we are able to do as much as possible by finding strength here. In short, all these are inherent in each other. There is no arithmetic sum among them. Someone will look at this; someone will look at that - This is not arithmetic. It's a matter of immanence.

Secondly, if torture is only but an extremely important component of the cluster of experiences, then the rehabilitation process is not a matter that will only freeze them into that experience and cover other rich experiences. Rather, it is a journey that will reveal other rich experiences and incorporate them into reparative processes by reinterpreting the traumatic process. In this respect, reductionist or pathologizing approaches should be avoided. The word "trauma" is a problematic word. Yes, we discuss it too. The word trauma should not be used in the sense of pathological diagnosis. What we are experiencing is torture. For example, you accidentally bump into something and part of your body gets hurt, it turns purple. It bruises, your soul hurts. This is a negative experience. But torture won't necessarily cause a serious mental

problem. It may and most likely it will. But it would be useful to try to not handle this with a pure pathological and trauma-focused approach. I would like to remind you that distress and pain is sometimes a normal response.

Thirdly, since human beings have a physical, spiritual, social, and political coherence, health is defined as physical, spiritual and social well-being. That is why the treatment and rehabilitation process makes medical and mental care services necessary, including legal and social care. This requires qualified and interdisciplinary teamwork supported by scientific studies and continuous professional development. We must take care of all of these while trying to reach the state of goodness.

Fourthly, a person who has been subjected to torture may have experienced other serious human rights violations as well. We call this “complex trauma;” there is such a concept. Therefore, it is important to develop programs that are specific to cope with complex trauma.

Fifthly, as I mentioned, torture does not only target the person subjected to torture, but the whole society. Then, this reparative process requires a more holistic approach to prevent violations and establish a sense of justice.

In order to realize this holistic approach, there are things we can do individually as well as together. We have things to do as an organization. We have things to do on a national level, in an international environment, not only amongst ourselves. There is no arithmetic relationship between them either; they are all inherent in each other. Therefore, it is possible to say that the discussion of what to emphasize more is not appropriate after a while.

Now I want to move on to the fourth and last part of my presentation. The violation of this prohibition of torture or what we call a grave human rights violation is not just a bilateral relationship between the perpetrator and the exposed. It is not a matter of “he tortured him.” There is a third actor who we call the witness. Even the word witness is controversial. But we call them the perpetrator, the exposed and the witness so that it’s clear. Society itself is a witness to all this. After all, all this happens in an environment where I have a role as a member of the society. As an element of society, we are the subjects of society. Being a citizen means being a subject anyway. So if one person is harming another, we cannot walk away as the third actor. It means that I allow it to happen, as a member of this society I actually have a responsibility in this context.

Because when we talk about human rights, by definition, whom we call the perpetrator is a government official or someone acting on his behalf. As you know, the use of violence against another person in daily life can't be handled within the scope of human rights. There has to be a power in question. We empower someone as a society. All of these are undoubtedly debatable, but in accordance with the contract being followed today, the society gives certain groups the authority to detain someone for the safety of the society, for your safety. All penal execution systems can be debated, but ultimately the society gives this authority to the judge and to others. But while we give that authority, we also put some limits on it as a society. We say: "You can detain a person for my security, but you can't violate any of his rights except that he is deprived of his freedom, moreover, all his rights will be protected by you." If you don't ensure his security and torture him, that's a criminal activity. Then the society that gives the authority to them should call them out.

Now think of everyday life. When can the witness turn into the perpetrator or the exposed? Right now I am a witness, but I can also be an exposed person, sometimes even a perpetrator. Can the exposed turn into the perpetrator? This is actually very permeable in itself.

Indeed, we live in such a country that the usual and the unusual are often mixed together. About half of the republic's history of ninety-six years, forty-three years have been governed by official unusual regimes. As you know, the official state of emergency was lifted in July 2018. But on the same date, a law was passed that states, "We are lifting the state of emergency, but we actually need similar practices for the next three years. As the conditions of state of emergency continue, the detention period will be twelve days, anyone can do whatever they want, and they can fire whoever they want". I mean in practice, the state of emergency resumed. So the other half was governed by substantial, unusual regimes in practice. We live in a country that has witnessed extraordinary upheavals and social traumas in the last century.

Only recently, many people lost their lives during the clashes related to the Kurdish issue. As you know, at the end of 2012, there was a period of intense clashes in this country. Then one day something happened and clashes ended as of January 2013. Then one day another thing happened, the clashes started again. So we see that the clashes could come to an end instantly if desired. When peace is not desired, the clashes can begin again.

War and clashes destroy everything, moreover, they destroy values. Unfortunately, it's not possible to bring a person back from the dead. It is

not possible to restore this destroyed cultural heritage. These forests that are burned take centuries to regenerate. After all these experiences, I would like to draw your attention to a point regarding this malicious process that we will overcome anyway. Laws or institutions can be reconstructed in a short time, but it is almost impossible for the constructed laws and institutions to survive in an environment where values are destroyed. For this reason, we must address the issue of losing these values in particular, and we must work hard together on vital approaches that will reaffirm the founding role of human rights values. The destruction of values affects generations.

The issue we call the ongoing social trauma; as a society we are in such a state that we choose to forget our past painful experiences. We avoid it; it's understandable because it is a mechanism for all of us. It's a coping mechanism: you forget or repress. But at the same time, there is such a practice of administration that it tries to make people forget, with the prohibition of remembering, names and mourning in these regions. That's why we can call Turkey "the country of incomplete mourning." Especially related to the Kurdish issue, this is such a complex and ongoing trauma that has spread to the whole society in waves for the past forty years.

Of course, if you are talking about an incomplete mourning... In order for the past to remain in the past and the future to arrive, the mourning process must be completed. When it's not complete, when you can't rewrite the memories and reinterpret life, you come across false, isolated memories and isolated groups. People are growing apart from each other.

"How can we change the state of the society?" I think it is necessary to analyze the issue again and again over these universal liberating values, in order to overcome all this disruption. It is possible that all of these can be realized through integrated programs combined with the right to truth, access to justice and remedy and reparation programs. A journey from a disrupted past to a shared future is in the center of the conflict resolution.

Of course, this isn't a single program either. They have a reparation process. The processes in which there are no clashes are undoubtedly very valuable in themselves. But as you know, peace is not just an environment absent of clashes. That's why equitable peace means; democracy, a revolt against the loss of values, a cooperation based on values, and being involved. It's beyond expecting someone else to do it. Me, you, us, them, directly... You got to get involved.

We are facing the fact that despite all this effort, we have experienced this terrible malicious process, we are still experiencing it and we couldn't prevent it. Okay, undoubtedly the biggest responsibility belongs to the government. After all, whether you like it or not, the ruling power is assumed to be empowered by the society. But here, as a society in which we all belong, we could not prevent this malicious process. Moreover, many of our friends were killed; extraordinary efforts were made. This effort should not be disrespected in any way, it should always be remembered, because if something is to be done tomorrow, it will be done thanks to these efforts.

We could not prevent this whole malicious process, but none of it was fate, it all happened and is happening because of humans. We have a basic saying in the field of healthcare: "If something is done by humans, it can be absolutely prevented." Period. The fact that we couldn't prevent it until today doesn't mean that it cannot be prevented later. On the one hand, history of war constitutes a considerable part of human history. But this means that the history of peace also constitutes a considerable part of human history.

These are preventable incidents, since humans carry them out, and the prevention of them is possible through you and us. Believe me, we have great knowledge and experience on this subject. In fact, we have conscience, hope, everything that has been filtered from the suffering of this country's soil - beside the worlds.

QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

Participant: *We can more or less see the solidarity of non-governmental organizations within the country. So, are any efforts made on human rights at the international level that will also affect the relations here? We see that such activities were more common in the past, especially in the 1990s. After Leyla Zana's speech in the parliament, she was supported and given awards. However, currently there is no international interest in freedom of expression. What do you think?*

We are all really aware of everything. I can say something based on my own experiences in the foundation. I have already said in my speech but let me be clearer: We are facing a humanitarian crisis in Turkey. If there is a situation where a person is stripped of their rights; that is a humanitarian crisis. It is the same around the world. There is a human rights crisis in the world. Let's skip the previous periods. After all, this is the seventy-first year of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As you know, the structure called the

UN was founded in 1948 with the basic slogan “Never again!” in the tangible conditions of that period in the world. Back then there was a group of socialist countries and a group of capitalist countries. The balance of that period produced this resultant vector. From one aspect it may seem incomplete, from another aspect something else can be said, the discussion may prolong. But it came out as the result of a balance with one basic slogan: “Never again!”

What’s never happening again? Tens of millions of people lost their lives in the recent Second World War; countries were destroyed and burned. So that we never experience something like this again. While writing it, a nice sentence was added at the beginning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That balance was able to put that sentence there: “It is an essential necessity to protect human rights by a legal regime so that people won’t have to rebel against oppression as a last resort.” In other words, as stated in that declaration, a rebellion against injustice is within the scope of human rights. It’s an implied admission. As a last resort, these rights are given to prevent people from revolting, and the world has experienced a lot since 1948.

I was a child in the 1960s. All over the world there were extremely strong values that I could feel even as a child and very strong hopes for the future based on these values. I was a young adult in the 1970s; I am one of the incredibly lucky ones. There was extraordinary beauty in every corner of Turkey and the world as well as pain. Of course, a series of events started in Latin America with the military coup against Allende in 1974. In 1980 there was a military coup in Turkey and our foundation was established.

I also know what happened in the 1990s. There has been a change towards the end of the 1990s, especially since the 2000s. I’m not just talking about the attack on the Twin Towers in the US on September 11, 2011. You know, after that the US adopted the policy: “Either you are with me or you are a terrorist!” Currently the spokespeople of the ruling power in Turkey have a similar approach. After that development, such a process is going on in the world.

We moved step by step. Right now it’s clear how well the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the UN that expresses the values “Never again!” is respected in Turkey and in the world in the real sense. It is not revered; the great powers do whatever they like. They could have been doing it before, but when they did it before, they faced the challenge of a binding field. This humanitarian crisis in the world also affects human rights. For example, those who worked in human rights in the 1990s had a more naive attitude caused by the accumulation of the past. What do I mean by naive? There was the

value and knowledge of that conscientious movement. Now we see much more of being influenced by “instrumentalization” and this is the case with international mechanisms as well.

What I mean by international mechanisms are the UN bodies, which Turkey is a member of and bodies of European Council. One of the main pre admissions was as follows: The operability of these mechanisms was brought to the agenda with the pre admission that the minimum democracy rules would be respected. States will respect this as a minimum. So when the UN’s X committee does something, the states will say; “Yes, we are making an effort on this too.” However, we are currently experiencing a huge gap over what will happen under conditions where it’s not respected. It is not revered. The mechanisms have become dysfunctional.

First, there is decadence in human rights. Second, there is a critical dysfunction in human rights mechanisms. Then we need to take an approach that will highlight human rights as a constituent element, both in Turkey and in the world.

With its humble mission, TİHV makes a lot of effort in this regard. The Istanbul Protocol is an example of this. Nowadays, we have completed a study covering the whole world to make the Istanbul Protocol more effective and functional in the light of new developments. As TİHV, we are implementing some programs in Israel and Palestine with this motive. We’re trying to do some work here and there, in Sri Lanka, the Philippines. I am not saying this to glorify our foundation, but we are working towards the strengthening of the international environment by getting strength from where we are.

Let me give you an example here. Our representative, Doctor Serdar Kuni, was arrested after the implementation of curfews. The Serdar Kuni affair turned into a spectacular international campaign after his arrest. He was our representative in Cizre and we had just established that facility. The World Medical Association made special decisions after that huge destruction in Şırnak. The population of Şırnak decreased from 95,000 to 47,000. Seven neighborhoods in the center have actually disappeared. At Serdar Kuni’s first hearing in March 2017, we were together with human rights and healthcare institutions from many places including the World Medical Association and the US. I know that we were the first international delegation to enter Şırnak to this extent at that time. You said awards; Serdar received awards. Likewise, the president of the TİHV, Şebnem Korur Fincancı, who was prosecuted during this period, received many awards.

We should try to make as much space as possible for knowledge and values. Unfortunately we were already feeling it before as a foundation. It was also featured in the press during the period when there were no clashes. We were people who said; "If this process won't result in positive outcomes, we will experience unimaginable suffering." We had to accomplish it, and we had a hard time imagining so much destruction. While the uninterrupted curfews continued, I asked directly to some relevant people then "who has thought of imposing an" official "curfew for days and weeks?" It's a one of a kind practice in the history of Turkey. As you know, no official curfews were imposed in the 1990s. Back then people were told, "you can't get out," unofficially. According to various studies, nearly three thousand settlements were evacuated. There is a little difference in numbers, but many were burned and destroyed. But they were not 'official.'

The official curfew lasted for days. The first one was on September 12, 2015, which was an eight-day curfew in Cizre. The average time for a person to survive without water is three days. I was saying this because I have a medical background. 120,000 people lived there; civilians had not left Cizre. Water is not available every day in Cizre. You know, there are water tanks on top of the houses. Water tanks were hit with a single bullet from afar. We attempted to conduct scientific studies with many colleagues in healthcare; we tried to statistically reveal many negative factors affecting human life based on this. Who would have thought? It was unimaginable! It happened, yes, we have been through a lot.

And at that time I asked relevant people, "Whose idea was this?" They replied, "It's not under my authority."

After all, despite all this, there are things that can be done. For example, one of them is working towards possible optimistic scenarios during the non-clash period, but also preparing for possible negative situations. We decided to found a reference center in Cizre in 2014, during the non-conflict period. Friends in Diyarbakır would go and try to help. We even had the last training in June 2015, before the clashes started. Working with the pessimistic scenario, we accelerated the opening of our center and opened it in October 2015. The main issue is one, the strengthening of the area and two, the extension of the area. After the clashes unfortunately began, we did two and a half times more work during the official state of emergency process. We started to work on new fields directly related to the prevention of grave human rights violations. For example, we made space for expelled Academics for Peace. We tried to make space to continue the work of some institutions

that are shut down. In this period of intensive repression, we tried to create spaces for the institutions that were shut down and the expelled academics to facilitate their work - not all of their work - on the common ground of severe human rights violations.

They make you feel like “You are nothing,” right? “You are nothing,” as the concrete form of this evil and torture. This is the main message of the blindfolding practice, which is frequently applied to detainees. I experienced it too in 1980. They don’t blindfold you to hide their faces; you can see them through the blindfold. “Keep your head down!” The tone of their voice... “I am able to do anything, your fate is in my hands, and you will perish.” That’s the main reason they create that ambiance.

Today everyone says there is no rule of law. This is not an issue to be taken seriously and discussed. How can I take it seriously? When it is discussed, it gets funny. In such conditions, there is no rule of law in this environment; there is no this, there is no that. They give us the following message: “There is nothing you can do anyway. Don’t go to the courthouse, don’t make an application; you won’t get results. There is nothing you can do.” They are trying to impose this on us. They give us this message.

This is why our meeting here is so precious. Wherever people meet, whoever makes an effort, they are all very valuable. From time to time there are discussions like: “This needs to be done.” Anyone can do whatever they want to do wherever they like. It’s based on the values that will hold and expand the field, because the weakest part of those villains is their lack of values. Those who support those villains know how shredded their values are best; we look from afar. That’s why I tried to share the values at several points. Let’s have a discussion, these are the things that I and we as a foundation care about: knowledge, persistence, strengthening of the solidarity atmosphere, expanding the field.

Participant: *You have dealt with 17,000 torture cases. Frankly, it’s a terrifying number. You are probably dealing with the worst, the most ugly face of the state. I want to ask about the challenges of this job. You really are “where there is pain and suffering.”*

In the past twenty years, there has been a tendency to do projects in civil society - including us. Projects are started just to find funding. What are the goals of the institution? What needs do they satisfy? What do they try to solve? Let’s say there is a call for funding and there is a resource. Let’s write a suitable project for this. Is it within your institutional priorities? Applications

are made just because they fit the call. I remember that “the third sector” notion was even used for a while. NGOs became a sector.

This caught my attention: The fact that volunteer work is one third of the organization's resources really caught me attention. It is a really difficult field to work in, you are dealing with the most ugly aspect of the state and you are exposing it. Despite that, one third of your resource consists of volunteers; that really impressed me a lot. There are no organizations that use volunteer resources to that extent, even in Diyarbakir. Organizations are stuck between four walls, “professionalized”, and even severed all ties with the audience. This is where we are headed. I want to ask you this; how did you build a volunteer network at this level?

You are asking it in a positive sense. Your last question can also be viewed in reverse. Before TiHV was established, the work in this field was hundred percent voluntary. Actually, we can think of the current situation as a decrease from one hundred percent to thirty three percent. I just tried to explain it. An organization - please tell me if there is a better definition - is about organising the work. So you will define a task based on a need. You organize how to accomplish that task, and then it's an organization. For example, when the need to make these cookies is determined, the issue of making these cookies in the most qualified way and making sure they are delicious is what we call organization. Therefore, even if an organization wants to work on anything else then organising relevant tasks for this defined need, it cannot. To give an example from everyday life; there is an excellent basketball team. When you make them play football they probably get childish, they can't do it. You have to feel this first, that's what an organisation is.

Yes, TiHV was founded in 1990, but the story of TiHV started before that. Maybe it caught your eye. There, the treatment of those who were subjected to torture had already started with one hundred percent volunteer work. The healthcare sector has changed very rapidly in Turkey; there weren't any private hospitals back then. There was a four way institutional structure consisting of public hospitals, university hospitals, doctor's offices, and health centers. We were doing it in daily life anyway. We didn't have a choice. What made us do it? Let's approach the question from this aspect. It wasn't really forced on us. People asked, “What can I do?” to make sense of their lives and a network formed between these people. Why were they feeling this way? The effect of September 12 was huge. I'm lucky, I was imprisoned but my friends died right in front of me. I've been living with that debt ever since. I'm lucky;

I survived. Lucky I survived. Some people were imprisoned; some were not. I thought, “what can I do?” just like the rest of the people who were discharged.

Values are very precious. Sometimes it can be said that each of us may have personal preferences that we respect, but these values are essential. Isn't everyone making an effort to make sense of her/his life anyway?

Our field has another nuance; getting professional satisfaction as healthcare professionals. They directly mobilize their profession. The actors involved in a process are physicians, mental health professionals, and social workers. Those who started the scientific studies there, such as the professor in İzmir started that bone scintigraphy study in the 1980s. The whole world knows Veli Lök. He is recognized not only in Turkey but also in the world. You will see his name in the literature.

The human extent of it, making sense of yourself as a human; this is not a difficult matter anyway. As a matter of fact hardship has no place in it. Then you can project from past to today.

It wasn't about a project. But then the foundation was established. Why? - To be more systematic, to create more favorable environments, to penetrate more. Yes, money was also needed. As I said before, TIHV carries out projects too, but the projects are carried out with its own funds in order to facilitate the development of its own *raison d'être* more effectively. Of course, a project is valuable when it is considered as a tool for making a study more effective based on its own knowledge, not an end in itself.

Let me answer your question about the funding. I had just mentioned risks of professionalization and instrumentalization while trying not to go too far. It triggers the humanitarian crisis and it's a damaging factor. The basic rule in medicine is: “First, you will not harm.” It does harm. We said “Stop if you're not doing anything!” For example, carry out gardening projects, irrigation projects; it would really be useful. Okay, this is not a separate job.” We said, “It belongs to everyone, to every citizen.” But it's not so arbitrary. There is such a risk. We have to question our role on the emergence of this crisis.

Participant: *I think the critical issue here is the values. It seems like the connection your generation has with values is not the same as the youth's.*

We may not see the new generation clearly from where we stand. Turkey had experiences that proved that. I guess we have to confront ourselves from this

aspect. How can we see? How can we achieve it? Firstly we need to leave this discriminatory mental state behind us.

But we are dealing with this in a positive way; for example, I just talked about our programs aimed for these younger generations; which will enrich us, but it will also make us able to transfer our knowledge to the next generations. And even these limited efforts show promising elements that new generations have strong values. Moreover, some public opinion polls show that young people between the ages of 18-29 are more tolerant and respectful of individuals' differences and more sensitive in terms of freedom in the last decade. Therefore, I think that even these limited experiences and observations categorically guide us through how the younger generations relate to values.

On the other hand, this young generation's inability to access sufficient knowledge, skills and equipment on human rights due to the erosion in universities, simultaneous media pressure and restrictions on the human rights field, has turned into an extremely important problem.

Moreover, new generations are at the risk of adopting current conditions as norms where violations are commonplace. For example, young people enter law school at the age of 18. At the university they don't discuss that the state of emergency and the curfew is an ill treatment or a violation of human rights, as the UN stated. These young people are growing up thinking this is normal. As a result of all this, there is a young generation in their twenties who carry the title of "public servant," applying all kinds of arbitrary pressure on people who are deemed "dangerous" or "enemies." These practices are implemented as if they are normal. It became their norm; they say, "That's how you do this." They also have no past experience and are not able to compare.

We were able to have meetings with ministers and governors on the human rights violations that took place in the 1990s. As I said before, it was at least more civilized. The prime minister, ministers and governors wouldn't officially claim responsibility for the grave human rights violations, but at least they would say, "Oh did that happen?" By the way, perhaps this is why the term "deep state" emerged. If they are not the responsible party, then there must be some other people deep inside the state, and we are left with Green (Mahmut Yıldırım). Green is responsible for everything!

From the new generation's point of view, these are already ordinary and expected. There is no other way. It's not possible for them to compare the situation

with the past, that's the problem. Because of these reasons, sharing values and knowledge with the new generation in any level is extraordinarily precious.

As for the question of how we deal with such cases, it has many elements; naturally, one of them can be considered as secondary trauma. Maybe we share the same story. We call the journey with traumatized people secondary trauma and these traumatic processes are transferred. There are also programs to avoid this, under the title of "caregiver care." We pay attention to that as much as we can.

Participant: *I believe the resource issue is a very important problem. A few months after I started university in 2001, I started volunteering in the field of civil society. We founded an association after two or three years. Naturally, we obtained our first resources through projects. Project cycle etc. Back then, as we were learning about project cycles etc. and implementing them, we were having the exact same problem you mentioned. In other words, the non-governmental organizations start to have another agenda apart from the main activities they carry out in order to pay their rent and maintain certain things for a while. In the simplest terms, they try to maintain their own existence.*

I wondered what it was like in the world. I have seen that in countries where the field of civil society is strong, effective and sustainable, political intelligence dominates this process. A triangle of economics, politics and civil society is dominant in which the power, responsibility, actions and gains are in a certain balance. There is a balance in the triangle of the economy/business world, politics/public administration and civil society. All the issues on the agenda of civil society are already on the agenda of both the business world and the public authority. The work of civil society is for everyone's benefit. Consequently, the business world is always willing to support civil society under the name of social responsibility or in other ways. They even encourage it from time to time. Public resources are also available.

The business world in Turkey doesn't really know about the relationship between the work of civil society and how it benefits the business world. In recent years some very large corporations started to realise it but that's it. Most of the time public authority defines the field of civil society as harmful rather than helpful anyway.

In my humble experience, people taking part in NGOs are people coming together with common values, with exceptions. I think we have to face our prejudices against the economy, business world, trade and financial

movements created by our political and religious dogma. How can equity be created for our NGOs encapsulating all of our values? For instance, we were working with children. Back then I suggested opening up a kindergarten. Let's constantly propose projects; let's receive funds. The activities are continuous and you need to receive great amounts of money. There are human resources and materials needed. You spend money on a lot of things. I really think that NGOs and their staff need to get rid of their canned approach and educate themselves on this matter. We have a lot to review in our relations with the world of economics and in our current forms of knowledge. Our strong level of intellectual values is not always enough for us to maintain our actions.

The data you presented just before impressed me, the percentage is down from one hundred to thirty three! Today you think that thirty-three percent is a huge ratio, because in civil society the ratio is generally one or two percent. In other words, it's a successful and beautiful example, all the work involved is voluntary and it's a field in which you pay a "psychological price," a field working in human rights and torture. Everyone you come in contact with, everyone you provide a service for has been through serious pain. This has an effect on you too. We really need to update our way of thinking and knowing about this issue, if we are experiencing such a regression over time, even in that field.

Participant: *I have a question regarding the structure and employees of TiHV. You work on a difficult subject. You need volunteers. I guess it is a very difficult field to work without volunteers. I work in the field of civil society, but frankly, I work in a very comfortable field. I am the project coordinator of a funding organization. TiHV has young volunteer workers and maybe employees on salary who have to work professionally. It should not be easy for them to cope with this process.*

And how do you maintain this continuity as an institution? Your work must create a cultural background in order to deal with certain processes. For example, whom should you contact in a city? Those people also gain this experience as they work over time, but the stories they listen to, meeting face to face with people whose rights have been constantly violated and not being able to remedy them immediately can be a huge burden. Even our friends who had face-to-face interviews just for their master's or doctoral dissertations developed fatigue and sorrow after a while. They did not know how to deal with this sorrow either. Perhaps your employees also face this challenge. You said the ratio of volunteer workers dropped to thirty three

percent. Could this challenge have caused the drop? You know, this is an ongoing process and it will not end no matter how hard we struggle. After a while people are worn out. How many people of your age and generation are left still working in this field? How will young people be included in your work? What kind of an interim solution do you have for this?

The issue of the decrease in volunteer contribution that I have expressed should not be perceived this way. The work in this field was carried out with volunteers before the foundation was established. We were thinking of ways to be more effective during discussions within IHD and TTB and as a result we decided to establish a foundation. Then, we needed more organized spaces and staff, so keeping our volunteers we moved on to another stage in which we had a few facilities. This inevitably led to a need for funds. So it's not a weakening process; the work was carried out by volunteers before the foundation and one third of it continued to be carried out by volunteers after the foundation was established, there is no decrease in this sense. I just wanted to describe the situation before and after the foundation was established.

Secondly, in 2012, we prepared a report with the findings we got after re-searching the profile of our employees. We came to the conclusion that “we are getting old” and we were a bit misunderstood after that statement. We wrote that we were getting old in 2012 because there was an older generation present during the founding process. We were the middle generation back then. We thought of employing younger people in 2012. We decided to employ more women, young people and LGBT+ people.

This led to a great diversity. In this way, our foundation has grown two and a half times. This year, a research was carried out on all TiHV employees. As of today, we have over three hundred volunteers as well as sixty-one employees, each of whom should also be considered as volunteers. Sixty-seven percent of the employees are women. Sixty percent of the employees are between the ages of 20-39. At least in this respect, we are quite young.

The work we carry out, as a foundation, is really hard to deal with. In order to avoid secondary trauma, we try to implement programs called “caregiver care.” Think of “caregiver care” programs this way: first of all, the environment in which you will operate is important. What we call an environment may seem a little abstract. This may be a space, human relations, internal operation, teamwork, and the allocation of tasks within the activity itself. That's why there are executive units in every center; the units discuss both the case

and the internal operation, before all issues pile up. All operational processes are also an element of this. Secondly, the information and knowledge on this subject are strengthened through training. Thirdly, we try to implement supervision programs in “special” professional groups, especially mental health professionals. In some centers we implement them much better. In others, we don’t do it enough. We can’t afford everything, but we struggle and try to make it happen. They are critical in terms of protection. We also share our experiences with friends in different institutions.

The issue of continuity... Now, of course, when the foundation gets younger like this... Young people are brilliant people. They have dreams for the future; they have their daily lives, as we all do. Firstly, we didn’t have to think about job security when we were children. You would go to university or not, you would get a profession. You would work in that profession all your life and then get retired. Job security wasn’t an issue. I attended a free boarding school. You didn’t have to pay for education. I’m the son of a civil servant. Maybe that’s why health wasn’t an issue. You would go to the hospital when you were ill. There weren’t additional fees either. You could get medicine; you could have a surgery. There were no private hospitals. We weren’t a generation demanding to go to private hospitals. In our time there were universities, public hospitals, health centers and a social insurance institution.

Nowadays, the entire education of a child including kindergartens and nurseries is extremely expensive, especially private schools. The new generation naturally says, “If I have a child, I need to spend this much on their education per year, and their health expenses will cost this much.” There is no job security either. In such a period, of course, there is another dynamic you just mentioned that is caused by being a paid employee in these environments. We go through that too. It is natural; you have to sympathize. This is a reality. Of course, we pay attention to it in these environments. On the other hand, there is no such market left anyway. We can’t offer the market salary. Which market? Let’s say we are talking about physicians, what’s the salary of a physician? There is a wide range of salaries in the market but either way it’s obvious that the salary we offer is lower. We are trying to increase them but we can’t compete with the market because the market has turned into a wild jungle. How can we compete? We try to do special things. We try to provide better conditions for those who have children. These are of course modest efforts and there is an inevitable circulation.

Another issue is the pressure we face and the illegal tools to sustain this pressure. Many of our friends in Van were subjected to rights violations through

decree-law. They lost their jobs. Surely they will get their job back and get their accumulated wages and compensation as soon as possible. They will get their passports back but what is going to happen to the years they lost? Their children, loved ones, neighbors... They are acquitted, of course we are happy about it but these physicians left Van after they lost their jobs due to decree-law. They couldn't find a job in Van and went to Istanbul where it's easier to find a job for physicians. For various reasons it's not easy to manage the circulation.

As we try to avoid this circulation, we also try to maintain our work when there is circulation. We try to make space for these friends. If they find another job for financial reasons then they become a volunteer worker in our foundation. They blossom like vineyards; especially the healthcare workers. They go from one health institution to another. It's not certain. We try to strengthen these networks.

Participant: *Rehabilitation is an intricate subject. You have already insisted, in capital letters, that this is an end result. So you said it couldn't be achieved without the other elements of rehabilitation. That also means the following. Normally, rehabilitation is defined as integration of a patient into the society after the recovery process. That "re" prefix sounds passive, like a drawback. In fact, we are talking about a person who is equipped with rights, as you said. Therefore, society needs to be ready for him.*

Encounters and confrontations need to take place for those except the ones subjected to torture, in order to heal previous traumas. That's rehabilitation. Therefore, I wonder about how the perpetrator feels as well as the person who was subjected to torture. The perpetrator is the torturer. As a matter of fact, these perpetrators from the 1980s and 1990s live among us. Have you encountered them as TIHV? I don't think that they contact you to clear their conscience. But maybe they do, or maybe there are perpetrators that made confessions to the General Prosecution Office. Did you conduct a study on this? They are the ones who are really sick. I mean, how can a person torture someone? How can they be so violent? There are infamous people in history. For example there is the famous Eichmann case back in the Hitler period that took place under circumstances of war. There are people who said it was their duty to torture. Maybe this is more of a sociological or political issue but how do you view the perpetrator from a healthcare professional's perspective?

Thank you so much; it's a legitimate warning. We use the words treatment

and rehabilitation together. I tried to express it carefully. I have tried to share that the word rehabilitation has five levels within itself and how it is a holistic approach, I agree. Since this is something we have imported from the field of medicine, you can feel it there too.

For detained people; on the streets, two streets away from here, we made a statement saying that police brutality, torture and ill treatment took place especially after August 19. The following day human rights institutions in Diyarbakır made a similar statement. What do I mean? What people call “tear gas” in daily life, here we call them “chemical weapons.” It’s a weapon made of chemical substances and if it’s used against peaceful protesters, it’s not a justified use of force. There isn’t a situation to contain; they are sitting down peacefully. But they go and use chemical weapons. What happens there? Our eyes hurt, we need medical intervention. It’s a simple intervention. Our chest hurts, right? Mental damages can also occur. Surely medical intervention is required. But I agree with you on not medicalizing the issue as I also expressed during the presentation. Thank you very much.

On the perpetrators issue: In 1996, the foundation had a serious discussion on this subject. As you said, this cluster of perpetrators really lives among us. In the end, we decided to exclude them from our scope, thinking that it might harm the treatment and rehabilitation process of people subjected to torture, our foundation’s *raison d’être*. Yes, as a group engaged in this issue, we decided not to work on perpetrators even though we have a considerable amount of experience in this field. But it is definitely an issue; we can’t live with these perpetrators as if nothing happened. It’s an important element in conflict resolution.

In the next conflict process, it is obvious that programs need to be developed so that the past can be left behind and we can move on.

Participant: *On July 15, people were subjected to torture in front of the cameras. Have the victims made any applications regarding this? We talked about it with İHD. İHD is making efforts; they reach out to families and say, “Come, don’t be afraid.” How did THİV handle the situation?*

Hereby, I would like to express once again that we pay utmost attention to the absolute confidentiality and privacy of our applicants, and that we do not share any information about individuals under any circumstances. Naturally, we should not share information about our applications as per the principle of privacy. For example, we were on trial in Adana. They requested the names

of our applicants; we didn't give them at the cost of trial and punishment. We had a great dispute, we were right.

In the meantime, we prepare our annual reports and share them with the public by making the applicants anonymous.

As we have mentioned in these reports, torture and other ill-treatment practices became more common after July 15, but I would like to remind you that torture and other ill-treatment practices had already increased significantly, especially after the clashes began again in July 2015. They are widespread and systematic. Actually, the numbers are really high. I have stated that over one million people in Turkey were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment practices. The number of applications we received was 17,600 as of the end of 2018. You can say that it is a small percentage, but if you look at it from one applicant's perspective, their whole world changes. Despite such a large number of people subjected to torture, I can say that we have a limited number of applications. I can say that we have applicants from various segments of the society who were subjected to torture at varying proportions. I think the press is covering this. There were six enforced disappearances this year in Ankara. Four of these people were heading towards the police station one evening, and the police detained them claiming that they were in the vicinity of the police station. The police announced this to the public. The remaining two are still missing. Maybe you've seen the families of these people. They make their statements in İHD and TİHV. I felt the need to tell this in order to answer the question of what we do.

EPILOGUE:

THERE ARE ALWAYS THINGS TO DO FOR PEACE

Vahap Coşkun

There is no general definition of conflict, which is an interdisciplinary concept, adopted by everyone. Because conflict is a concept that includes a series of relationships and types of behavior and creates different associations in minds. Although it is not possible to agree on its definition, it can be said that there is consensus on the causes of the conflicts.

A conflict is usually a dispute over values: economic, political, ideological, cultural and ethnic differences. It occurs due to psychological and geographical factors. While individuals or groups want to realize their interests, needs, values and demands, they think that they can be blocked / prevented by other people or groups. When it reaches sufficient intensity, that thought takes action, causing tension between the parties, which eventually turns into conflict.⁶

Not all conflicts are violent. Likewise, the conflict cannot be described as an adverse event by its nature. Conflicts, if not violent, can also play a transformative role for societies. However, if the parties give up peaceful methods to protect their interests or achieve their goals and try to dominate the other side, conflicts start to be violent.

Violent conflicts cause multifaceted damage to societies. Because every party that wants to impose its word on the other party uses all its power to damage and even eliminate the other party's material and spiritual assets. The prolongation of the conflict and its spreading in space magnifies the destruction in society. People die and get hurt. A huge burden is placed on the economy. Geography will be ruined. There is a loss of freedom. The democratic space shrinks. In short, conflict causes an unbearable picture in every respect.

However, no conflict lasts forever. Every conflict is eventually resolved. Some factors such as the fact the parties see there is no possibility of achieving a permanent and sustainable military victory, realizing that the origin of the

6 Nezir Akyeşilmen, "Çatışma Yönetimi: Kavramsal ve Kuramsal Bir Analiz," in Nezir Akyeşilmen (Ed.), *Barış Konuşmak* (Ankara: ODTÜ Yayınları, 2013), p. 40.

conflict is political, or the change of leadership changes the game⁷ and puts the search for a solution instead of continuing the conflict. Therefore, no matter how deep the cause of the conflict is, after a certain point the blood stops and life returns to its normal flow becomes a common value.

There is no single way to a solution. States sometimes make constitutional and legal corrections on issues that they think create conflict, and try to improve their relations with those who make their demands, without entering into any negotiation process. Sometimes they negotiate with groups that hold guns and are seen as parties to the conflict. Sometimes they follow both paths at the same time and thus aim to end the conflict.

Whichever path is adopted, civil society has the potential to play an important role in the solution processes. The success of a process is closely related to the acceptance of the idea of a solution or peace by the majority of society. The longer the conflict, the longer the perception that the conflict will always continue and will never change. For this reason, the supporters of the solution should first of all dissipate this air by strongly arguing that the conflict is not a natural or a familiar situation. Society must be convinced that the issue is not unsolvable, that it can be overcome with democratic and political mechanisms, that a solution reached in this way will not harm anyone, but that everyone will gain from it.

It is very unlikely that the state alone or the parties will achieve such broad-based acceptance. Therefore, the architecture of the process should be as inclusive as possible. Conflict settlement is a multi-faceted dialogue; it requires an effective effort at the level of leaders, opinion leaders and the public. A vibrant civil society network strengthens these efforts and contributes to social acceptance by increasing the number of actors involved in the process.

Civil society has a job to do at every stage of the road to a solution. Civil society in times of conflict - that is, when the spirit of dialogue and negotiation is not read and violence is increasing - can work to reduce violence, to discourage the parties from violence, and to eliminate the victimization caused by violence as much as possible. In the public sphere, it can argue that the orientation to dialogue and negotiation is both more morally preferable and may produce more politically and economically reasonable results. It can keep the idea of peace on the agenda even under the most adverse conditions.

7 Kristian Herbolzheimer, "Barış Süreçlerini Canlandırmak: Kolombiya ve Başka Yerlerden Çıkarılacak Dersler," in A. Betül Çelik (Ed.) *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Barış Süreçleri* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017), p. 92-93.

During negotiation periods, it can support negotiations. It can organize public meetings to socialize the negotiations. It can bring different social segments together. It can create platforms that will enable the mutual demands, pains, concerns and hopes of the parties to be better explained and understood. It can serve as a bridging function to bring the parties closer together. It can cooperate with the MPs who stand behind the negotiations by negotiating with lobbies and establishing links with parliament. It can observe the legal preparations.

In times of faltering negotiations, civil society can keep peace on the agenda with channels that will penetrate deeply into the public opinion and negotiations between the parties. It can warn the public against manipulation by anti-peace politicians and media. It can put the parties under democratic pressure to return to the table.

In post-conflict periods, however, civil society can assume the advocacy of a fair and equitable order. It can build areas where different groups can act together for the arbitration of peace. In processes aiming to resolve violent conflicts, the process necessarily puts security at the center. Civil society can turn society's attention - as well as security - to issues such as participation, inclusiveness, welfare, the situation of minorities, identity and language rights.

In short, peace processes are carried out simultaneously in many branches. Civil society plays a very important role in this context. With this in mind, Diyarbakır Institute for Political and Social Research (DiSA) organized a series of seminars focusing on the functions of non-governmental organizations in conflict resolution and social peace building. The seminars organized under the name of "Peace School" had two main purposes:

The first was to point out non-governmental organizations can carry out activities that can bring the idea of peace and solution to the public agenda under all circumstances. The solution is not left solely to the initiatives of the parties to the conflict. The parties may not see the time appropriate for a solution. They may choose to leave the dialogue or negotiation to another moment, taking into account some calculations. They may think it is right to wait to take a step. But civil society is not bound by these thoughts of the parties; it should not identify itself with them. Because there is always something civil society can do for peace. Especially in Turkey between the years 2013-2015 in an environment where the Solution Process was executed, it should be underlined that defending the thoughts of peace and the solution has a great value in the public domain.

The second was to share the experiences of non-governmental organizations operating in critical areas of solution processes such as group-internal socialization, public communication and advocacy, protection of citizens, social cohesion sensitive to conflict, monitoring and accountability, direct service delivery, mediation and facilitation. The importance of discussing experiences and drawing the necessary lessons from them in order to be more intellectually prepared for possible future processes should be without explanation.

Civil society organizations cannot build peace themselves, but they play a supportive role in peace processes. Peace needs not only the will of the parties but also a holistic effort. "Parties may leave the table more than once during the negotiation processes. But if societies embrace peace processes and put pressure on leaders, it is always possible to return to the table. Peace processes are not limited to negotiations. It is bigger than the negotiating tables. That is why it is necessary to keep the faith alive and to continue the struggle for peace at different levels."⁸ Non-governmental organizations bring this closer to solution and peace as much as they can.

8 Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Barış Süreçlerini Anlamak ve Canlandırmak," in A. Betül Çelik (Ed.), *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de Barış Süreçleri* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2017), p. 10.

The construction of a peace house is possible with spaces of reconciliation. Creating spaces of reconciliation can neither be done by the end of conflicts alone, nor is it something that actors in conflict can do alone; moreover, political actors cannot achieve such a social construction alone. Contrary to popular belief, conflicts do not only take place between the conflicting parties. These conflicts destroy social relations in many economic, social, cultural, administrative, spatial and psychological areas and create new social relations “poisoned” with hatred and hostility and these new relations create sub-systems and systems.

Going beyond nonviolence, going beyond politics, re-establishing poisoned social relations requires a multi-layered, multi-actor and multi-dimensional social mobilization from micro scale to macro scale. Civil society actors can play a key role in such a mobilization. They can contribute not only to the re-establishment of relations in the social field, but also to the transformation of the political field.

This book consists of the discussions of the program titled “The Role of CSOs in Conflict Resolution and Social Peace Building” organized within the scope of “DİSA: Peace School”. A fascinating and promising story of seven civil society organizations awaits you.