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预防武装冲突

2019 年 11 月 21 日土耳其常驻联合国代表给秘书长的信

谨随函附上 2019 年 10 月 31 日在伊斯坦布尔举行的题为“国际和平调解：盘点和展望”的第六次伊斯坦布尔调解问题会议简要报告(见附件)。*

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常驻代表

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2019 年 11 月 21 日土耳其常驻联合国代表给秘书长的信的附件

Summary report of the sixth Istanbul Conference on Mediation

The Sixth Istanbul Mediation Conference was convened on 31 October 2019 with the theme of "International Peace Mediation: Taking Stock and Looking Ahead" under the auspices of H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey. The UN Secretary General (UNSG) H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres delivered the opening speech of the Conference along with the Minister. The UNSG's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation (HLAB) held its fourth meeting on the margins of the Conference.

The Conference was livestreamed on and uploaded to the official YouTube channel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (@TCDisisleri). Throughout the Conference, #istanbulmediation was widely shared on Twitter.

The Istanbul Mediation Conference series have a unique place within the broader Enterprising and Humanitarian foreign policy concept of Turkey. Situated at the epicentre of a volatile geography, Turkey pays particular attention to prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts with a particular emphasis on the importance of mediation. Every year, the Conference brings together experts and practitioners from around the world to raise awareness on the importance of mediation and contribute to the conceptualisation in the field.

The Sixth Istanbul Mediation Conference was dedicated to fulfilling these objectives. Firstly, it aimed to take stock of the role of regional/international organisations in mediation, particularly on coherence, complementarity and cooperation among different actors. Secondly, the Conference facilitated a state-of-the-art exploration of current issues in the prevention and resolution of conflicts by the members of the HLAB. Each member focused on issues s/he deemed significant for more inclusive, promising, effective and long-lasting mediation. Last but not least, the Sixth Istanbul Mediation Conference also looked ahead by continuing the discussion initiated at the Fifth Istanbul Mediation Conference on the challenges brought by digital technologies. It was agreed that while new technologies create opportunities for mediators, they also bring about several unprecedented challenges.

Opening speeches

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu stated that despite the short-lived post-Cold War euphoria about the decrease in the number of conflicts, violent conflicts continue to be a troubling aspect of the international affairs. He underlined that conflicts are complex and prolonged, and the need for effective mediation is great. He underscored that mediation efforts of today should match the level of complexity of conflicts they intend to resolve. After having summarised what Turkey has done in this regard, the Honourable Minister touched upon the importance of digital technologies while also underlining the still predominantly human-centric nature of mediation.

The UNSG pointed to the changing geopolitical realities of conflicts which make the matter more complicated. Highlighting the need for mediation in every phase of conflicts, the UNSG stated that mediation cannot wait for a military stalemate or request for help. H.E. Mr. Guterres said that as the number of actors involved in conflict and mediation processes is increasing, coordination among different actors is key for success. He also pointed to the growing importance of technologies and digitalisation by focusing on their pros and cons.

Together, the two opening speeches complemented each other and set the stage for a lively exchange of views among the participants involving practitioners, academics, students and members of the civil society organisations.

Session I: The role of regional/international organizations in peace and mediation

The first session of the conference was dedicated to the role regional and international organisations play in peace efforts and mediation. To this end, the panel brought together Baghdad Amreyev (Ambassador, Secretary General of the Turkic Council), Mohammed El-Hacen Lebatt (Principal Strategic Adviser to the Chairperson of the African Union Commission), Rauf Engin Soysal (Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the OSCE) and Miriam Coronel-Ferrer (Member of the United Nations Standby Team of Mediation Experts).

Under the moderation of Itonde Kakoma (Program Director, Crisis Management Initiative), each panellist started by summarising how different international organisations contribute to the field of mediation. Although each organisation had dealt with different conflict contexts and environments, there were several intersecting points that came to the fore during the panel.

The panel focused on the necessity of incorporating various actors at national, regional and international levels in conflict resolution and mediation. However, the panel also outlined that there are certain issues that need to be understood to achieve this inclusivity. Five points were stressed in this regard: (1) for sustainable peace, all actors involved should be given a say, (2) mediators should use personal skills as well as legal frameworks to approach conflicting parties, (3) mediators' intent should be genuine and based on a willingness to resolve the conflict, (4) to persuade each conflicting party to take part in negotiations, mediation and peace process as a whole, they should be assured that some parts of the agreement, if not the entire agreement, will be meeting their expectations, and (5) actors involved in peace processes should also include real decision-makers and leaders who will have decisive impact on the outcome of the agreement.

The panel touched upon the dichotomies between process-based and results-based mediation approaches as well as frozen and active conflicts. It was highlighted that frozen conflicts should not be neglected as they have the potential to erupt again and lead to a more violent conflict environment.

In mediation processes, one of the most daunting tasks is to address "spoilers". While addressing this issue, the panel brought in a new perspective rejecting the term of "spoilers", arguing that the term itself could be problematic. Although it is a challenge to make each and every single actor fully satisfied with the outcome of a mediation process, such categorisation might alienate certain actors from the process.

The panellists also underlined the fact that each conflict has both internal and external dimensions. In fact, most conflicts of today have been internationalised. Therefore, even when we are talking about a localised conflict, regional and international organisations may be involved. One single mediator or organisation may not resolve a conflict on its own. At any rate, cooperation and complementarity are key. Persons and processes matter.

Session II: The state of mediation and conflict prevention today: a facilitated discussion with the members of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation

The second session of the conference brought together several members of the UNSG's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation (HLAB) in a panel moderated by

Noeleen Heyzer, also a member of the HLAB. The panel featured Nasser Judeh, Tarja Halonen, Roza Otunbayeva, Sima Samar, Radhika Coomoraswamy, David Harland, Jean-Marie Guehenno, Gert Rosenthal and Ramtane Lamamra. The panellists discussed the state of mediation and conflict prevention from a wide array of angles, experiences and expertise.

The panel started with a discussion on human rights and sustainable peace. The argument put forth was that in comparison with the olden days where peace could be regarded merely as ceasing fire, today's approach to conflict resolution must be more robust and comprehensive. Although parties to conflicts may not always wish to discuss human and women's rights, both the literature and experience demonstrate the longevity and sustainability of peace processes incorporating these crucial components. The examples from Liberia and Northern Ireland were discussed to illustrate direct involvement of women in peace-making.

While discussing the inclusivity dimension, the panel also underlined the importance of participation by all actors including the victims of a conflict. If victims are not heard, they may seek revenge and ultimately derail the peace process.

Another point raised in the panel was about the limits of inclusivity. It was argued that sometimes the mediator had to talk to people despite disagreeing with their motives, methods, and/or approach. Despite the conventional wisdom of "one makes peace with those who made war", the panellists argued, this does not mean that only those holding the guns should be included. Instead, those making the ideas should be a part of peace processes as well. The important point here is adhering to the ground rules to be introduced by a third party as the number of actors involved increases.

The panel also shed light on the importance of education in both conflict resolution and conflict prevention. The need to improve education and increase access to education for both boys and girls across the world is ever-increasing. The role of education is to provide individuals with tools to improve themselves, find decent jobs and contribute to their societies. Once this is achieved, the panel revealed, feeling of independence will increase among individuals who will then understand that they matter. This realisation will play a key role in combatting extremism which is often the case in conflict contexts.

One of the panel members also discussed the role of force as a factor in peace processes, noting that in some cases, the use of force could prepare the ground for mediation and peace processes.

The HLAB panel underlined the need for a holistic approach in peace processes. As some agreements may resolve immediate concerns of the conflict parties, there are also deeper issues which need to be understood. Unless a proper historical analysis is conducted, the root causes of a conflict may not be addressed and this could jeopardise the longevity of peace agreements.

Fragmentation was another concern stressed in the panel. As conflicts now cover a wide geography, actors involved in a particular conflict might get fragmented leading to more fragmented expectations. However, it was noted that just like conflicting parties can be fragmented, the third parties and international community could be fragmented too. Along with complementarity and coordination, building confidence among conflicting parties and mediators could prevent further fragmentation as confidence may make different actors interact with one another easily.

Economical concerns and problems were discussed in the panel as they relate to the root causes of conflicts as well as the sustainability of any peace agreement.

Therefore, addressing them properly would help mediation and peace processes. Given the competition over natural resources, there could be new or renewed conflicts. Hence, the comprehensive framework of sustainable development should be upheld as a way to cope with conflicts both before and after they erupt.

The panel also touched upon the role of technology from a dual perspective. New technologies will ultimately provide mediators with additional tools that will enhance and ease mediation, peacebuilding and peace-making efforts. Nevertheless, these technologies and social media are not exclusively available to peace makers. Terrorist organisations or armed groups can also make use of these platforms. Likewise, online dissemination of hate speech would exacerbate current conflicts or lead to new ones.

Session III: Emerging technologies and peace efforts

The last panel focused on how emerging technologies may affect peace efforts. The panel, moderated by Akın Ünver (Assistant Professor Dr., Kadir Has University), brought together Maria Khodynskaya-Golenishcheva (Senior Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation), Miguel Varela (Associate Professor Dr., Valladolid University) and Jonathan Harlander (Acting Project Manager, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue).

The panel focused on the impact of emerging technologies on information. The speakers underlined that with the increasing pace of digitalisation, more and various types of information is available to mediation processes and mediators themselves. To adapt to this changing exposure of peace processes, mediators should be apt at understanding and utilising digital tools in their endeavours.

Impacts of new technologies on mediation have been categorised under four different domains: conflict analysis; engagement with the parties; inclusivity; and strategic communication. With regard to conflict analysis, the panellists stressed that technology may help mediators better identify the needs of conflict parties and locate them on their conflict map. When it comes to the engagement with the conflict parties, new technologies enable mediators to reach each conflicting party easily and without additional cost. Regarding inclusivity, emerging technologies may help mediators consult hundreds or thousands of affected people at the same time. As for the strategic communication, mediators can give targeted messages to specific constituencies.

However, the panel also outlined the downsides of emerging technologies. The most obvious ones discussed by the panellists included disinformation, hate speech and violence. It was argued that although these downsides may have a more severe impact on conflicting parties, mediators have their connections and can access the information on the ground, which would mitigate the impact of misinformation. Additionally, it was underscored that social media companies and legal experts may contribute to endeavours to combat misinformation.

It is expressed that technology will continue to impact people and it will continue to be a key element for mediators to stay grounded. Despite the heavy focus of the panel on emerging technologies, the panellists also acknowledged the mainly human-centric nature of mediation.

Closing remarks

Burak Akçapar (Ambassador, Director General for Foreign Policy, Analysis and Coordination at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey) wrapped up the discussions by highlighting the key messages of each panel presented above.

Ambassador Akçapar underlined that the Sixth Istanbul Mediation Conference aimed to look at the past, present and future of mediation, and to contribute to thinking and policy processes regarding conflict resolution and mediation.

Additionally, he stated that Turkey has paid particular attention to the nexus between technology and peace and though with action. In this regard, he mentioned the Fifth Istanbul Mediation Conference and the 10th Ministerial Meeting of the UN Group of Friends of Mediation where the topic was widely discussed.

He stated that Turkey has been and will be concentrating on the digitalisation in line with the launch of the "digital diplomacy initiative" of H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu at the 11th Ambassadors Conference in August 2019.

The large number of students from various cities of Turkey underscored Turkey's strong emphasis on investment in the youth and on youth and gender inclusion.

He concluded his remarks by underlining that Turkey will take the issues discussed in this Conference to various international fora such as the UN, OSCE and OIC in order to fuse thought with action.

Final words

Approximately 400 participants from 51 different countries took part in the Conference. Participants included high-level officials from several countries as well as international and regional organisations, representatives from diplomatic and consular missions, conflict resolution and mediation experts, scholars and students.

The Conference has lived up to the need to map out mediation efforts on a broad agenda where theoretical conceptualisation and practice are both important.

Information and documents pertaining to the Conference can be found at the official website of the Conference (istanbulmediation.org), which is regularly updated.

Acknowledgments

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