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# The New Kid on the Block: Turkey's Shifting Approaches to Peacebuilding

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## Abstract

An increased Turkish engagement in international peace operations over the last decade corroborates Turkey's new status as a "rising power." Turkey's high regard for the sovereignty of host nations, national ownership, inclusive processes, and beneficiary needs separates it from established actors and classifies Turkey with the other emerging powers like Brazil, India, China and South Africa. Yet, Turkey's utilization of "untied," "desecuritized," and "bilateral" humanitarian aid and development assistance as instruments of peacebuilding places Turkey in a league of its own even within the rising powers camp. This article hence examines whether Turkey's resort to these new practices can contribute new norms to the liberal peacebuilding discourse. It also outlines a number of challenges in the department of quantitative analytics, as well as monitoring and evaluation, with formidable potential to disrupt the momentum that Turkey's peace missions have gained over the years. We conclude that Turkey must apply complexity thinking and develop monitoring and evaluation programs to foster the longevity and effectiveness of its peace operations.

## Keywords

Turkey, Peacebuilding, South-South Cooperation, Development Assistance, Humanitarian Diplomacy, Africa

## Introduction

Security threats, financial crises, political uprisings, and collapsing regimes have been among the defining characteristics of the turbulent, post-9/11 world. An important outcome of this cataclysmic instability is the denigrated architecture of the post-war order. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the financial crisis of 2008,

the Arab uprisings and an accompanying migration of displaced people in biblical proportions, as well as the new non-state actors wielding sizeable military power and political influence, have instilled a new sense of urgency in the discussions over new global governance models that are rescued from the “monopoly of the Great Powers” (Kaldor & Stiglitz 2013). As the search for more inclusive, representative, and egalitarian models of global governance continued in the meeting halls of world-renowned think tanks and prestigious forums, throughout the first decade of 2000s a new strain of contenders such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and Turkey have risen to the task, staking their claim on global governance. Although they all hailed from different corners of the world, these new rising powers shared a few common characteristics at the time: they all achieved robust economic growth after decades of volatility; they were enjoying a period of political stability following extended periods of uncertainty and violent contestation for power internally; they have wielded a significant amount of influence over their respective regions via soft or hard power. More important, with the exception of Russia, these emerging actors were not only demanding a larger decision-making capacity at the influential institutions of global governance, but they were also willing to share more burden with the Great Powers, taking on entrenched global issues. Amongst these issues, peacebuilding has attracted the most commitment from rising powers, and it has been an area in which the impact of the contributions from certain new actors such as Brazil, Turkey, South Africa, and India have been most demonstrable.

This paper will particularly focus on Turkey’s experience as a “rising power” in peacebuilding. It will highlight the characteristics of Turkish approach to this phenomenon, and evaluate the effectiveness of its efforts. It will juxtapose the core tenets of Turkey’s peacebuilding practices with the strategies and practices of traditional donors. The article will use a number of indicators developed by both the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development’s (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) (Birdsall & Kharas 2014), and the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NEST) as benchmarks of comparison. It will use examples from Turkey’s various peacebuilding efforts in theatres such as Afghanistan, Somalia, Libya, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **New Global Trends in Peacebuilding**

The conceptualization of “peacebuilding” can be traced back to the early 1990s. According to the United Nations Peacekeeping Fund [UNPBF] (1992), it was coined by the former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali as an “action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.” However, international community’s failure to prevent and resolve the most entrenched conflicts in the early 1990s, such as Rwanda and Bosnia, obscured the potential of peacebuilding. The

concretization of peacebuilding only came forth with the 2000 Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations (Brahimi Report), which outlined among the core responsibilities of UN, the rebuilding of key institutions in an inclusive manner to prevent conflict.

The broad themes that the Brahimi Report touched upon – national ownership, inclusion, the importance of institutions, the relationship between conflict prevention and development, and tailored approaches – were elaborated in a number of breakthrough initiatives from the mid-2000s to this date. In 2007, the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee emphasized the necessity to tailor peacebuilding “to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership” (UNPBF 2007). The 2009, 2010, 2012 progress reports of the UN Secretary General on peacebuilding identified “support to basic safety and security,” “inclusive political processes,” “provision of basic services,” “restoration of core government functions,” and “economic revitalization” as the five pillars of peacebuilding (UN Security Council 2010). The World Bank's 2011 World Development Report stressed that building strong, inclusive and accountable institutions, promoting livelihoods, justice and security, and moving towards inclusive practices would help combat internal stresses that led to conflict (The World Bank 2011, p. 145-174).

The most recent reviews and processes at the UN, such as the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations [HIPPO] (2015), the Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the UN's Peacebuilding Architecture (2015), the Global Study on Women, Peace and Security (2015) and the Secretary-General's Report on the World Humanitarian Summit (2015) have emphasized the need for a stronger focus on preventing conflict and sustaining peace to overcome the mounting costs of vicious cycles of conflict, response, and relapse. Secretary-General elect Antonio Guterres has recently stated that “the root causes of conflict, poverty, inequality, human rights violations, and even environmental destruction are interlinked,” and attached “core importance” to the role of prevention (*UN News and Media United Nations Radio*, 12 April 2016). The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda included a standalone sustainable development goal (SDG) on “peaceful, inclusive and just societies” (Goal 16), with seven of the other 17 SDGs including an aspect of peace, inclusion, or justice (Steven, 2016).

Peacebuilding is a comprehensive, multi-dimensional activity of a political nature that cannot be undertaken by any single actor alone. As a result, all the recent reviews and processes on peace and security issues, development, and humanitarian affairs highlight the importance of partnerships for sustainable solutions. As chronic conflicts and humanitarian crises continue to exert increasing pressure on the global system, and stretching the international community's response

capacities and resources to its limits, the role of different actors and innovative approaches will be more important than ever, creating new entry points for rising powers.

### **Turkish Perspectives on Peacebuilding: Principles, Approaches, and Shifts**

There is hardly a unified definition of peacebuilding among the most-engaged actors from the Global South.<sup>1</sup> Turkey is no exception to this rule. As is the case with India, Indonesia, South Africa, there is no concept paper or strategy document that informs or constitutes Turkish government's approach to peacebuilding (Woods & Sazak 2016).

Despite the absence of a formal definition of peacebuilding, Turkish peacebuilding efforts mostly reflect a broader template of engagement in peace and development issues. Turkish embassies, consulates, and TIKA offices have been founded, Turkish Airlines commenced regular flights, humanitarian and developmental assistance programmes have been launched, commercial activities have begun alongside mutual high-level bilateral visits (Sucuoğlu & Stearns 2016). In conflict-affected countries such as Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Libya, and Afghanistan, these efforts are complimented by engaging in mediation activities, security sector reform and institution building, and contributions to peacekeeping efforts (Sucuoğlu & Stearns 2016). Different interviews for past studies conducted with government officials separately by both co-authors disclose that from Ankara's point of view, a vast range of activities from development projects to humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping operations, and even private sector investments in conflict-affected countries, are considered as peacebuilding, as well as infrastructure projects, health care and education services, job creation, security sector reform, and institutional capacity building projects (Sucuoğlu & Stearns 2016).

This approach to peacebuilding as a comprehensive and multi-sectorial exercise, ultimately aimed at addressing the structural reasons and root causes of conflict, is mostly in line with the global definitions of peacebuilding, explained in the previous part. However, Turkey's increasingly hands-on involvement in conflict-affected countries has been accompanied with a discourse on solidarity, brotherhood, horizontality and mutual benefit, which is often seen as part of south-south cooperation efforts. This discursive shift is highly visible in Turkey's former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's remarks in 2013, which elaborate on a new Turkish foreign policy that dismisses a "values-free realpolitik agenda, solely focused on

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<sup>1</sup> Supported by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Carnegie Corporation, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, American University, "Rising Powers and Innovative Approaches to Peacebuilding" was a two-year project undertaken by a list of select think tanks from emerging powers. The project studied the peacebuilding contributions of Brazil, India, Turkey, Indonesia and South Africa, with a specific concentration on case studies from Somalia, Afghanistan and South East Asia.

advancing its economic and security interests,” and places ethics, civil rights, upholding human dignity and integrity, as central pillars of Turkish foreign policy (Davutoğlu 2013). Building on these values, Turkish peacebuilding narratives emphasize the reconstruction of institutions and infrastructure that are critical for people in conflict sensitive areas to live in dignity, prosperity, and peace.<sup>2</sup>

Various interviews conducted by Istanbul Policy Center and the Center on International Cooperation with Turkish government officials, aid agencies, NGO representatives, and beneficiaries on the ground have revealed four elements that have consistently been used to define Turkey's approach to peacebuilding: a) an emphasis on non-conditionality, b) a shift towards bilateralism, c) direct delivery on the ground, and d) a multi-stakeholder approach that is slightly biased towards government-to-government cooperation.<sup>3</sup>

### *A non-conditionality emphasis*

The application of clear political and economic conditionalities in aid and assistance to push for normative principles and values, especially in the area of human rights, is one area of divergence between more traditional donors and Southern providers. Turkey strongly adheres to the principle of non-conditionality, in its support for conflict-affected countries (Aydın-Düzgüt & Keyman 2014). In interviews conducted in the context of a research done by NYU's Center on International Cooperation, several Turkish and Somali respondents concurred with this point, claiming that Turkey provides aid and assistance to anyone in need without any conditions or prerequisites (Sucuoglu & Stearns 2016).

This emphasis on non-conditionality for already precarious countries also differentiates Turkish assistance from that of traditional donors. Through adopting a non-conditionality approach, Turkey demonstrates that it is able to engage with recipient governments in a spirit of solidarity while not sacrificing effectiveness and efficiency. This “different” approach is visible in the narratives of Turkish offi-

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<sup>2</sup> Various interviews conducted by IPC and CIC: The CIC project was in the scope of a Canadian International Development Research Center project ‘Emerging Powers for Effective Governance in Fragile States’ implemented in collaboration with the South African Institute of International Affairs. The IPC data have been compiled over the span of four years between 2012 and 2016 as part of the “Peace Capacities Network” and “Rising Powers and Innovative Approaches to Peacebuilding” projects.

<sup>3</sup> Senior representatives of the following state agencies and nongovernmental organizations have been interviewed periodically from 2012 to date: Turkish Foreign Ministry, Turkish Development Ministry, Turkish Justice Ministry, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (IHH), Doctors Worldwide: Turkey, Dost Eli Foundation, Türkiye Diyanet Foundation, Cansuyu Foundation, Yardımevi Foundation, Deniz Feneri, Gülistan Foundation. The data collected through the interviews supplemented and synthesized in Teri Murphy and Onur Sazak 2012, Turkey's Civilian Capacity in Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center; Kathryn Achilles, Onur Sazak, Thomas Wheeler, and Aueven Elizabeth Woods 2015, Turkish aid agencies in Somalia: Risks and opportunities for building peace, London: SaferWorld, Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, Sabancı University. The interviews were conducted off-the-record.

cials. As the TİKA Director Serdar Çam (*Afronline*, 3 August 2012) underscores, “If we articulate this issue [conditionality] when dealing with any aid recipient, we would run the risk of punishing the people of that country in need of urgent help. Therefore, as an aid agency, our principle is not to interfere with the domestic policies of certain aid recipients.” Non-conditionality also helps empowering the national government and strengthens government-to-government relations. By distancing itself from the conditionality approach, which often leads to resentment from recipient states, Turkey avoids the stigma of association with the development policies of traditional donors it criticizes in its narratives, and emphasizes a mutually beneficial and sustainable partnership between donor and recipients (Younis et al 2013, Murphy & Sazak 2012).

### *A shift towards bilateralism*

Turkey is a member of several multilateral organizations with mostly Northern membership such as NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), although it is not a member of OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Traditionally, and until the mid-2000s, it has preferred to deliver assistance through multilateral channels. However, a robust shift in this pattern has been more frequently observed since the second half of the last decade: multilateral ODA accounted for 2% of Turkey’s total ODA in 2014, as opposed to 44% in 2004 and 60% in 2013 (*OECD Development Cooperation Report 2005*, “Turkey’s Official Development Assistance” 2014). TİKA also reports that in 2014 Turkey’s official development assistance reached \$3.591 billion. Of this total, bilateral ODA accounted for \$3.502 billion, whereas contributions through multilateral platforms were at mere \$88.73 million (Fusun Gür et al. 2016). The multilateral to bilateral shifts are also visible in other areas of peacebuilding: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey’s involvement until the mid-2000s was largely through multilateral channels such as the Office of the High Representative, NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) and the EU-led EUFOR-ALTHEA. While these roles are still important for Turkey, which has assumed the duty of the NATO Contact Point Embassy in Sarajevo from 2011-2014, in the last decade, this engagement has evolved to include a bilateral focus, such as the Trilateral Consultation Mechanisms (Bosnia – Serbia – Turkey and Bosnia – Croatia – Turkey), increased cultural and religious investments, after Ahmet Davutoglu became Foreign Minister of Turkey in 2009 and started advocating for a “more active Balkan policy” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey 2009).

Bilateral engagement with the recipient countries has a number of indispensable advantages. It presents the provider with the opportunity to better understand, directly engage, and build relationships with the national and local actors on the ground. Turkey’s increasing deference to bilateral arrangements dwells on the ef-

fectiveness of this model in expediting the process and delivering tangible results. For an emerging power with Turkey's aspirations of becoming an influential actor in the areas of humanitarian assistance, development aid, and peacebuilding in its region and beyond, bilateral delivery of assistance ensures more visibility than is otherwise obtained via multilateral modes of engagement.

However, multilateralism has its advantages over the bilateral engagement model too. Multilateral assistance leads to better coordination and a better use of comparative advantages of different actors towards collective outcomes, while preventing duplication. Although bilateralism cuts the time and red tape that delay the delivery of the donor's commitments, the limited exposure of Turkish agents on the ground to multilateral platforms curbs Turkey's positive contributions to burden sharing, in terms of humanitarian and development assistance. Furthermore, bilateral efforts from time to time lack a reliable monitoring and evaluation model, more available to multilateral mechanisms. For Turkey, as far as vague and qualitative evaluations of its success in conflict-affected countries like Somalia and Afghanistan are concerned, it has been more difficult to evaluate the impact of specific projects and programs. Cognizant of these shortcomings, Turkey is anticipated to develop a new foreign aid strategy. As of 2015, the talks of a new foreign aid bill in the parliament emerged. However, there have not been any concrete proposals advanced in the legislature to date.

***Desecuritization of engagement: Presence and direct delivery on the ground***

The rise in the number of active violent conflicts where international actors are present, the increased presence of non-state actors, trends of violent extremism, and attacks against humanitarian agencies, relief organizations and peacekeeping personnel have brought to the fore the valid concerns over the safety and security of civilian experts and aid workers in conflict zones (Duffield 2010). Targeted kidnappings and killings of aid workers have generated equally uncompromising precautionary and safety measures on the part of traditional donors. In the current modus operandi of many a conventional aid provider, representatives are nestled in a security bubble from their first day of training at the headquarters all the way to the fortresses of field offices in host countries. Duffield (2010) demonstrates that this "securitization" of assistance and heavily guarded compounds segregates development and peacebuilding actors from the populations whose needs and interests they need to prioritize.

By contrast, in high-intensity conflict contexts like Afghanistan and Somalia, Turkish government personnel and civil society organizations take pride in being present on the ground, and directly delivering aid without using secondary channels (a senior executive at the Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), interview, 26 August 2015). This "direct aid" approach, can be defined as aid "manned by Turk-

ish staff, who directly oversee the management of aid distribution on the ground, from its arrival...to its delivery to final beneficiaries” (Sazak, Wheeler & Woods 2015). In the same vein, it involves frequent visits of high-level Turkish leaders to conflict-affected cities. For instance, the repeated high-level visits of President Erdogan to Mogadishu and the direct delivery approach have contributed vastly to the visibility of Turkey in Somalia and beyond, helped draw international attention to the war-torn country, and given Turks the opportunity to explore the Somali market and aid dynamics first-hand. A more visible impact of the “direct aid” practice is that it reduces the cost of aid delivery by eliminating intermediaries, improves both the speed and accessibility of aid efforts, and facilitates direct contact with populations in these areas, leading to more needs-based solutions (Sazak, Wheeler & Woods 2015, 10). This does not mean that Turkey can operate in dangerous areas without any security considerations: Assistance efforts to Libya has been suspended due to the security situation on the ground since 2014; the Turkish Embassy and Consulate in Benghazi were closed the same year (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey 2016).

### *A multi-stakeholder approach*

Turkey’s narratives on its activities in conflict-affected states tend to reflect a long-term approach through various activities, which is invested in sustainable peace and development in the country. Turkish President Erdogan’s words during a meeting with The Afghan President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai on 18 October 2014, that Turkey would continue to stand by Afghanistan after the drawdown of international troops through mediation, facilitation and support to the security sector, is a reflection of this approach (*Yeni Asır*, 24 December 2015).

Turkey’s long-term multi-track and multi-stakeholder involvement in countries in various stages of the conflict cycle, such as Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Somalia, is in line with its framing of peacebuilding as a comprehensive activity that connects the peace and security, development, and humanitarian sectors. For instance, Turkey’s engagement in Somalia, from the outset, has combined political, developmental, economic, and humanitarian support, and has brought together a variety of actors – government officials, aid agencies, civil society representatives, religious organizations, municipalities, and the private sector.<sup>4</sup> These organizations often build relations with their counterparts from the recipient country, turning peace and development processes in priority countries into a uniquely inclusive, participatory process. In Libya, Turkey supported the UN-facilitated political dialogue process throughout 2015, took part in institution building, security sector reform and economic recovery efforts, and provided humanitarian aid and assistance until 2014, when the security situa-

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<sup>4</sup> TIKA’s 2014 Development Assistance Report lists over 30 public entities that provide aid to partners and allow TIKA to use the comparative advantage of various sector experts from different institutions.



tion on the ground necessitated their suspension (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, 2016).

On the other hand, like several other rising powers, Turkey's assistance is still biased towards government-to-government cooperation. While several different actors participate in the implementation of the assistance projects, the overall direction and framework of the relationship is often determined during high-level visits between Heads of State or Government. Furthermore, joint analysis and assessments among Turkish diplomatic, humanitarian, and development actors from the government, civil society and private sector sectors is not the norm. Additionally, one must note that while Turkey has adopted this holistic, multi-track and multi-stakeholder involvement in countries it defines as high-priority, it has been sometimes criticized in other theatres for the ad-hoc and short-term nature of its involvement (Sucuoglu & Stearns 2016; Hausmann & Lundsgaarde 2015).

### **How Do Turkish Peacebuilding Efforts Compare to Those of Other Rising Donors?**

In the previous section, we have demonstrated some ways in which the principal tenets of Turkey's approach to peacebuilding differ from those of established donors and traditional powers. Before assessing the effectiveness of Turkish mode of engagement, it is equally important to refer to the characteristics that set Turkey apart from the other emerging actors.

#### ***Brazil: A Reliable provider of security assistance in South America and Africa***

Brazil draws an important contrast to Turkey and other rising powers with its steady contribution of military personnel to UN peace operations since 1948 (De Coning & Prakash 2016, p.11). De Coning and Prakash (2016) further demonstrate that for over half a century Brazilian contributions to peace operations around the world—from UNEF I in Suez to MINUSTAH in Haiti, which is still active to date—has mostly manifested in the form of troop and police officer deployments. Brazilian troops and police officers served in 50 missions and performed a variety of duties from force protection to patrolling, protecting authorities, escorting convoys and aid transports (De Coning & Prakash 2016, p.13). From the Brazilian perspective, although heavily vested in robust military missions, peacekeeping is only seen as an initial stage to “create the conditions for effective prevention or the definitive resolution of the conflict” (De Coning & Prakash 2016, p.16). Although the Brazilian missions so far have taken very little interest in the humanitarian and developmental facades of peacebuilding, Brazil also see peacebuilding as an integral part of effective peacekeeping. In the same vein, it shares Turkey's and other emerging actors' commitments to national ownership, gender mainstreaming, and inclusivity in peacebuilding.

***China: A reserved partner in peacebuilding***

China has been a reserved and quiet member of the rising powers in peacebuilding. While China is often perceived as unilateralist, it is the ninth largest troop contributor among the 124 troop contributing countries (TCCs) (De Coning & Prakash 2016, p. 20). China today has over 3000 active peacekeepers. Of these 2839 are troops, 37 UN Military Experts on Mission (UNMEM) and 169 police officers. On peacebuilding, China shows some similarities to Turkish mode of engagement in terms of adherence to the shared principles of “consent,” “impartiality,” and “non-use of force” in narratives (De Coning & Prakash 2016, p.20). Like Turkey, China also operates in conflict-affected countries in Africa, but seems to apply a more investment- and interest-driven approach in its engagement. An observation of Chinese operations in Uganda attests to this less idealistic and more self-interest driven approach: operating behind blast walls and on secured compounds, transferring Chinese labor from the mainland instead of using domestic human resources, limited interaction with local stakeholders (Interviews, Kampala, 10-14 September 2015). In fact, an eminent China scholar Marc Lanteigne (2009, p. 134-136) suggests that China’s increased contributions to international peacekeeping has much to do to alter its prevalent image as a unilateral actor driven by its business interests, especially in the case of Africa.

***India: A devoted provider of troops and technical assistance***

India, compared to Turkey, is another veteran contributor to global peace operations since the late 1940s. Indian troop contributions are much more substantive though: It has deployed nearly 180,000 troops in more than 44 missions (De Coning & Prakash 2016, p. 39). It also has one of the highest rates of fatality, estimated 159 Indian peacekeepers. In addition, 7798 troops serve in 12 of the 16 current UN peacekeeping missions in the capacities of military observers, police personnel, and staff officers. From Southeast Asia to central and eastern Africa, Indian peacekeepers are deployed in conflicts with tremendous diversity in terms of political context and local drivers of the conflict. For example, while 4022 personnel serve with the MONUSCO mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), some 2187 personnel are deployed with UMISS in South Sudan, and another 898 serving in Lebanon under UNIFIL (De Coning & Prakash 2016, p.39).

As in Turkey’s case, a transition from predominantly investing in multilateral peace operations to more bilateral and multi-track peacebuilding is also observed in India’s approach, exemplified its involvement in Afghanistan. India has committed over \$2 billion to the reconstruction of Afghanistan between 2002 and 2014 (Sinha 2016, p. 28-29). The distribution of this aid encompasses food assistance to primary school children and construction and rehabilitation of schools; supply of staple grains and foodstuffs, construction of power lines between Kabul

and other key outposts in northern regions; annual scholarships to study in India, various dam and road projects; as well as the construction of the parliament building (Sinha 2016, p.30). The majority of this technical assistance is geared toward the improvement of the key Afghan infrastructure. They are consistent with India's pledge to act according to local demands and needs, in terms of capacity development and institution building. However, when compared with Turkey's aforementioned programs, it becomes clear that the Indian programs are geared more towards infrastructure building than human capacity development. Compared against the rising powers cited above, the human-centric approach to peacebuilding that Turkey exercises places Turkey in a unique spot.

### **How Effective Are Turkey's Peacebuilding Efforts?**

To evaluate the effectiveness of Turkish peacebuilding efforts, the first step is identifying what kind of an actor Turkey is, and where it falls in the traditional – non-traditional donor spectrum.

The OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) categorizes Turkey as an emerging donor – a country that has moved from being an aid recipient to providing increasing amounts of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Other Official Flows (OOF) (Smith, Fordelone & Zimmermann 2010). Turkey, in many ways, carries characteristics similar to traditional donors: its voluntary reporting of data to OECD-DAC, its participation in various (Northern) multilateral institutions such as OECD and NATO, as well as its contributions to multilateral development efforts (United Nations Development Programme, 2011). On the other hand, while Turkey does not categorize itself as a member of the Global South, its narratives and ways of working are similar to those of Southern providers of assistance to conflict-affected countries (Sucuoglu & Stearns 2016). The main tenets of Turkish peacebuilding efforts, as explained above, have much in common with the principles of South-South cooperation: respect for national ownership, mutual benefit, solidarity, context-specific and demand-driven assistance.<sup>5</sup>

As Turkey does not neatly fall into the category of neither traditional donor nor Southern providers, a mix of tools to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of assistance can be used to assess Turkey's development and peacebuilding efforts. First, Turkey's peacebuilding via assistance shows some convergences with the central pillars of Development Assistance Committee's "four dimensions of aid quality": a) "maximizing efficiency," b) "fostering institutions," c) "reducing bur-

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<sup>5</sup> All key SSC conferences in Bandung (1955), Buenos Aires (1978), Nairobi (2009), Bogota (2010) and Delhi (2013) have echoed the understanding that Southern providers, who underscore a partnership among equals for mutual benefit relying on their own experiences under a spirit of solidarity, might be uniquely equipped to foster sustainable development in developing countries.

den,” d)“transparency and learning” (Birdsall & Kharas 2014, p. 2-3).

Maximizing efficiency refers to donor countries’ ability to disburse its commitments to the beneficiary as horizontally as possible, leaving as few recipients as possible outside its coverage (Birdsall and Kharas 2014, p.2). From this perspective, one can argue that Turkey has fared mostly well. Its multi-stakeholder and comprehensive approach to peacebuilding and development, its ability to deliver aid directly and access communities beyond the reach of more traditional donors, its engagement with multiple local stakeholders ranging from national and local governments, civil society actors, community leaders, and private sector representatives have earned community support for its projects and ensured that they are more cost-effective, efficient, and stand a better chance to endure (Birdsall & Kharas 2014, p. 5). On the other hand, Turkish aid has been criticized in places like Somalia, of being too capital centric, prioritizing engagement with national governments, and not always being geographically inclusive.

“Fostering institutions,” on the other hand, deals with maximizing the institutional capacities of recipient countries. Of all the four dimensions, “institution building” is where Turkey’s peacebuilding contributions have made the most difference. As demonstrated in the Afghanistan and Somalia cases, Turkey’s significant contribution of human resources, in spite of the severe security and safety conditions that barred the majority of traditional actors and rising powers from these countries, has revitalized the most essential institutions ranging from security and justice sector to education, health services to infrastructure projects (Sazak & Özkan 2016). Sazak and Özkan (2016) point out that solely in Afghanistan, Turkey’s commitment to the revitalization of the country’s fragmented security sector provided training for thousands of soldiers, police, and gender-sensitive inclusion of minorities in these sectors. In the same vein, Somalia offers even more examples of Turkey’s contributions to restructuring of the central government and mediation between several regional governments such as Somaliland and Puntland (Sazak, Wheeler & Woods 2015).

Birdsall and Kharas (2014) also underline that “reducing burden” and “transparency and learning” are the two dimensions that necessitate high coordination among various donors and recipients for two reasons. First, multilateral coordination is an effective measure of reducing waste of resources, overcrowding, force multiplication that may emerge due to a lack of communication and cooperation between donors and beneficiaries. Finally, transparency and learning are two indispensable criteria that motivate donors to compile the necessary data to evaluate the scope, breadth, and effectiveness of their intervention. The learning segment of the transparency-learning dyad helps both the donor and beneficiary to make informed calls and choices on the sustainability of the ongoing projects. From these perspectives, Turkey’s unique shift towards bilateralism, unty-

ing its development assistance, and desecuritization necessitate more thorough empirical analysis. The content analysis of the TİKA reports, as well as interviews conducted with officials and NGO representatives indicate that monitoring and evaluation has been factored very little in the effectiveness of Turkish aid (Keyman & Sazak 2014; Sazak, Wheeler & Woods 2015).

Another tool, aimed at assessing the quality of south-south cooperation (SSC), is the recently developed framework created by the Network of Southern Think Tanks (NeST).<sup>6</sup> The NeST framework defines the quality of SSC, based on a qualitative analysis on how actors performs on a number of issues: a) inclusive national ownership, b) horizontality, c) self-reliance and sustainability, d) accountability and transparency, e) development efficiency.

On inclusive national ownership, Turkish narratives and approaches indicate respect for non-conditionality, non-interference, and respect for sovereignty, as well as demand-driven assistance. As mentioned above, Turkish assistance in conflict-affected countries has a strong reach, are mostly formulated at a government-to-government level, while their implementation is based on multi-stakeholder community engagement. While there are several initiatives aimed at empowering women and youth, these do not always translate into a strategy to address the needs of different vulnerable groups in areas of engagement. Efforts in Somalia have been criticized for concentrate at the capital and big city-level. Turkey's investment in the renovation of Ottoman-era cultural heritage destroyed during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been geographically inclusive, encompassing several towns such as Sarajevo, Pocitelj, Banja Luka, Travnik and Mostar. However, these efforts have sometimes been perceived as empowering one community – the Bosniaks – while not always supported by the other two – Serbs and Croats, which don't share the same affinity with the Ottoman Empire as Bosniaks (Think Tank Popolari 2014).

Horizontality can be translated as cooperation being mutually beneficial to both parties. A language of solidarity, trust, and “partnership among equals” does echo through Turkish narratives on engagement in conflict-affected countries. In practical terms, the extent to which each side benefits from cooperation is a matter of perception. Turkey's peacebuilding efforts, to a certain point, do reflect a desire to become more visible on the global scene, finding a space for its businesses and civil society to expand, and present itself as a model emerging donor. However, unlike many other traditional and emerging donors, Turkey's engagement in countries like Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Afghanistan has never been perceived as a foothold for economic exploitation or furthering military ambitions, and a cordial relationship between the governments and peoples has been the norm.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information on NeST see <http://www.saiia.org.za/news/welcome-to-nest-africa>.

Ending dependency and moving towards sustainable peace and development is the ultimate purpose of peacebuilding efforts. The NeST framework endorses this objective, underscoring the importance of capacity building, knowledge and technology transfer, using country systems and resources, and enabling domestic revenue generation. Fostering self-reliance and sustainability has been declared as one of the most important objectives of Turkish aid to Somalia in our numerous interviews with Turkish MFA, the development agency TİKA, and CSOs. They have pointed out to the focus on capacity building, the concentration on education through scholarships and building leadership skills, the manifestation of the long-term interest through building embassies and consulates, support to institutions and training of state officials, like diplomats, investing in Mogadishu city through roads, infrastructure, and employing local Somalis in several projects including private sector efforts. Turkey's efforts have really been remarkable in these areas, and in alignment with SSC principles of solidarity, capacity building and technology/ knowledge transfer, and use of local systems and resources.

On accountability and transparency, Turkey is one of the few rising powers that shares its development assistance data with OECD-DAC, including those pertaining to non-governmental organizations, and more sporadically reports to OCHA's Financial Tracking Services. Several Turkish NGOs and companies report data on the nature, scope, personnel, and budget of their projects to TİKA and the Ministry of Interior's Department of Associations, and they often publish project data on their websites (Doctors Worldwide, interview, Istanbul, April 2016). However, reporting is not always broken down geographically and by sector, and a standardized monitoring and evaluation model for projects on the ground is lacking. Developing indicators and quantifiable targets to measure progress is not common, and joint reviews and evaluations of projects together with stakeholders from the recipient country is not the norm, including the proper oversight of public-private partnerships.

Finally, on development efficiency, the presence of Turkish actors on the ground, "side by side with their counterparts" and local communities, has allowed these actors to be more adaptable to local conditions, needs, and wishes (Turkish civil society representatives, interview, Istanbul, April 2016). On the other hand, achieving coordination and coherence of efforts has proven to be a considerable challenge. Coordination efforts are especially difficult whence there are multiple agencies with independence and authority to negotiate their own intervention mechanisms with central governments and local administrations of host countries. For instance, a UNDP officer stationed in Ankara refers to the case while certain ministries run their own capacity deployment programs in far ranging places from Mexico to Somalia, they are not bound by law to inform TİKA, although they are encouraged to share their year's end foreign operations bud-

get with the latter (UNDP ANKARA, phone interview, 13 March 2015). In the Turkish case, the coordination efforts of the centralized development agency and the Turkish Embassy have not always prevented overlapping or duplication of efforts on the ground, or a balance of responsibilities among different Turkish institutions (Doctors Worldwide, interview, Istanbul, April 2016). Of course, coordination is also compromised by the shift towards bilateralism and a lack of true inclusivity in the planning phases of SSC efforts.

### **Conclusion: The Way Forward**

Our analysis of Turkey's innovative approaches to peacebuilding reveals several best practices that can be emulated from Turkish experience, as well as some fundamental challenges to which Turkey must pay attention in order not to succumb to the failures for which established donors have always been criticized. In the same vein, it would also prove instrumental for Turkey and other rising powers to adopt certain practices from traditional actors. While rising powers show considerable promise to soon become norm entrepreneurs in powerful bodies of global governance, they could still benefit from resorting to multilateral schemes.

Turkey has already broken the mold by transforming its peace operations from robust peacekeeping, as illustrated in the Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Afghanistan cases, to a more development- and humanitarianism-oriented, comprehensive peacebuilding—evidenced by its ISAF and Resolute Support Mission contributions in Afghanistan and post-2011 engagement with Somalia. Turkey has consequently come a long way from a unidimensional approach to peacekeeping operations to a non-linear, inclusive, and beneficiary-oriented peacebuilding. This enhanced understanding of peacebuilding can in fact factor in Turkey's transformation from a norm-taker to norm entrepreneur in global governance. As our study confirms, while Turkey is already applying key characteristics of complexity thinking (De Coning 2016, p.20), such as non-linearity and beneficiary-driven programs and projects (self-organization), its methods and programs can further benefit from implementing the following listed reforms:

#### ***Moving towards better data management and coordination***

A look into the websites of various government agencies, particularly TIKA, as well as line ministries, Turkish Armed Forces and NGOs indicate that these organizations have stored and reported data on Turkey's humanitarian programs, development assistance, and peacekeeping operations. However, little evidence suggests that any analytical work has been undertaken with a view to measure, identify and improve the weaknesses and challenges by which Turkish peacebuilding efforts have been confronted so far.

This observation has both positive and negative reverberations. The downfall of a

lacking monitoring and evaluation (M&E) program is recurring costs, waste, as well as the resulting ineffectiveness of a duplicated interventions that may exacerbate the conflict sensitivities that feed into the clashes in a host country. On the bright side, the lack of an extant M&E program can motivate Turkey to incorporate the novel complexity thinking into its approach. If done correctly, Turkey may employ its sensitivity towards beneficiary-driven demands (self-organization), its moral obligation that springs from understanding and being bound by the ever changing local dynamics of the conflict (nonlinear), as well as its respect for all sides and determinants of the conflict—and not just being driven by its own agenda (whole-system approach). By adhering to these three fundamental elements of complexity thinking devised by De Coning, Turkey can refrain from making the mistake of established donor and simply avoid utilizing M&E as a mere accounting tool to sanctify the premeditated, and therefore limited, donor objectives.

### *Improving the inclusivity and people-centered nature of cooperation*

One dimension of inclusivity is ensuring the participation of multiple stakeholders both from the provider and the recipient side, including governments, aid agencies, civil societies, community organizations, and the private sector, into peacebuilding and development processes. Turkey performs well on this dimension of inclusiveness. In Somalia, for instance, Turkish civil society organizations have been strongly involved in aid and assistance efforts from the outset, undertaking a wide range of humanitarian and developmental activities, conducted with the participation of Somalia NGOs. Involving these actors into a broader range of activities across the project cycle, and considering moving towards joint analysis and assessments, programming, and monitoring between the governments and other stakeholders can be one way to ensure better inclusivity. Once the investigations regarding the failed coup attempt are finalized, it could be useful to broaden the civil society space for the participation of different non-governmental organizations with various levels of expertise in peacebuilding efforts.

Another element of inclusivity involves ensuring geographical inclusion, across different areas, regions, and rural-urban divides. This understanding is fully in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda's call to "leave no one behind" in development processes and adopting people-centred and inclusive approaches to development. As direct aid delivery and access have been two of Turkey's biggest comparative advantages in conflict-affected countries, it could show the way forward for the international community, by reaching out to people in more remote rural areas, as well as different communities and groups beyond the capital cities. The initiatives in Somalia to open a General Consulate and TIKA Office in Hargeisa as well as the operation of a General Consulate in Mazar-I Sharif and two Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Wardak and Jawzjan until



2014 in Afghanistan can be highlighted as best practices in this area. Similarly, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Turkey's closer relationship with the Bosniak community has sometimes been criticized (90-95% of project applications submitted to TIKA are from Bosniaks), Turkey has made cultural investments in the Visegard Bridge project in Republika Srpska (the Serb Republic - RS), and Turkish Ziraat Bank has opened an office in Banja Luka, the capital city of RS. These efforts should continue.

The inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable groups, and ensuring their empowerment and equal participation in peace and development processes is another important dimension of inclusivity. The visibly community-oriented nature of Turkish projects already helps empower populations that risk being left behind. For instance, a joint project with the Somali Banadir municipality on sanitation made a special effort to hire women and youth in the implementation phase, and capacity-building programs and trainings for women parliamentarians in Afghanistan coordinated by the Turkish Embassy in Kabul have been common. All these individual efforts could be expanded to form a broader and more structured strategy to address the needs of different vulnerable populations in conflict-affected countries.

### ***Ensuring the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts***

Many emerging donors, like South Africa in the Democratic Republic of Congo and India in Afghanistan, prefer to engage in neighboring countries where they have strong interests. Compared with traditional donors, who often engage in conflict-affected countries with a broad exit strategy in mind, the geographical and strategic proximity of recipient countries to rising powers guarantees the sustainability of engagement. Turkey differs from other rising powers in this area. Its increasing capacities and abilities to engage in peacebuilding efforts, combined with its increasing ODA, has encouraged its ambitions to look beyond its traditional sphere of influence and engage in countries like Somalia, Haiti, and Myanmar. Ironically, this approach might have repercussions on the sustainability of Turkey's efforts in these countries, if pressing developments in closer geographies like Syria and Cyprus directly affecting its interests require its full attention.

Emerging donors are, by definition, undergoing rapid economic growth and political changes, which bring with it domestic social changes as well as new dynamics with countries in their respective regions. On the domestic level, rapid economic growth can bring about institutional change, which in turn can foster uncertainty and a lack of predictability. At the global policy level, it is widely accepted that both peace and development are long-term processes, and require sustained engagement to successfully build self-reliance and address root causes of conflict (UN Security Council 2016). The ability of Southern providers to bring

longer-term development and peace might also rely on the sustainability, continuity, and consistency of their efforts and engagement over time.

As Sucuoğlu and Stearn (2016) note, the challenges inside and outside of Turkey's borders continue to raise questions about the sustainability of Turkish peacebuilding efforts and the level of priority these efforts will receive. Like many other middle-income countries, Turkey might not have the institutional capacity to prioritize several foreign policy issues at once; if Somalia or Afghanistan loses their place among Turkey's top foreign policy priorities, the sustainability of its ODA might come into question. Additionally, a changing domestic policy terrain might also affect Turkey's ability to prioritize conflict prevention and peacebuilding in conflict-affected countries; developments after the failed coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016 might signal a changed strategic direction and new partnerships for the country.

In sum, supporting full self-reliance in conflict-affected countries require investing in skills, knowledge, and technology that will be needed in the long run. This demands a more strategic approach to capacity building, beyond short-term capacities that enable recipient populations to carry out projects on the ground or engage in business transactions. Even in relationships based on long-term involvement and solidarity, enabling the country to stand on its own feet should be prioritized. Hence, more focus is needed on domestic revenue generation and combatting illicit financial flows, especially in efforts concerning Africa.

## **Bio**

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Gizem Sucuoğlu is a Senior Programme Manager at New York University's Center on International Cooperation (CIC). Her area of expertise lies in the field of peacebuilding, conflict prevention, emerging donors, international and regional organisations, Turkey, the Balkans, Middle East and South Asia. Prior to joining the CIC she worked at the UN, supporting the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. She has spent 12 years working for the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and has served in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Israel, Afghanistan, and the Turkish Mission to the United Nations. Gizem holds a Ph.D. from the University of Kent in Canterbury.

### ***Onur Sazak***

Onur Sazak is a researcher at Istanbul Policy Center, Sabancı University. Sazak directed IPC's research and academic affairs between November 2010 and May 2016. His primary research interest is rising powers and innovative approaches to peacebuilding. He especially focuses on discrepancies between established donors and rising powers in terms of their intervention and impact on beneficiaries,

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