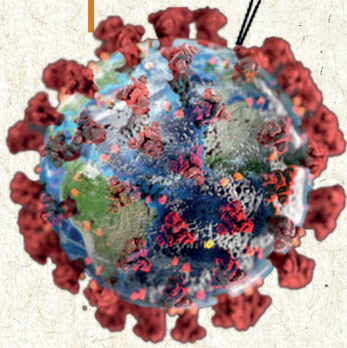


inter

The compilation of featured articles on INSAMER English

Biannual Journal (2021/2)

Notional



FOREIGN POLICY AND THE WORLD ORDER IN THE PANDEMIC

CHANGES IN
U.S. PALESTINE-ISRAEL
POLICY IN THE
BIDEN ERA

CHINA,
THE RISE

Turkish NGOs in Southern Africa

Relations with Africa constitute one of the prime orientations of Turkish foreign policy

Secular Extremism in Europe

Muslim identity is facing negative attitudes in modern Europe

Geopolitical Balance in the South Caucasus

the continuous geopolitical struggle in the Caucasus started to flare up even more

PANDEMIC
DEBT

For Goodness

**You can built the dreams
of thousands of orphans
by your donations**

**AN ORPHAN
SPONSORSHIP
COST
20\$**



+90 212 631 21 21 www.ihh.org.tr/en



***Azizullah Sadat**

Age : 9
Birthplace : **Afghanistan**
Dream Profession : **Teacher**

*Shared personal data are symbolic.

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Ahmet Emin Dağ

Managing Editor

Dr. Serhat Orakçı

Proofreading

Nur Fitri Taher

Art Director

Nuhun Gemisi

Contributors

Mokhammad Akhiyadov

Burak Çalışkan

Riad Domazeti

Emin Emin

Kadriye Sınmaz

Sueda Nur Çokadar

Rabiul Islam

Emre Yıldırım

Abdul Wahed Parry

Huthaifah Busuulwa

Kenda Shaherhawasli

Huzeyme Mohsen

Şamil Akoğlu

© INSAMER 2021

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of INSAMER.

Responsibility for the information and views set out in this publication lies entirely with the authors.

INSAMER is a research center of



EDITORIAL

Once again, the new issue of InterNotional is out with range of articles. Of course, we are glad to present fifth issue of the journal. This time we have focused on foreign policy and the world order in an unpredicted coronavirus epidemic. There are now signals that indicating vaccination programs all over the world are lowering the speed of spreading the virus while economies are recovering after a long lockdowns. However, it looks that the side effects of the pandemic will continue effecting the world order and foreign policy relations for a while. Especially pandemic debt burden and vaccine diplomacy will shape foreign relations. The US, Europe, China, Russia and regional powers like Turkey are on the frontlines of diplomacy shaping the world order. In this atmosphere traditional powers with traditional approaches face new powers competition. Although there were more optimistic approaches to new American administration, President Biden's approach to latest Gaza war proved that American administration will not return its traditional approach of supporting Israel unconditionally despite Israel's human rights violation against Palestinians. Similarly, Europe's traditional way of dealing with Islam and Muslim communities in Europe became a deadlock after Islamophobic policies like Hijab ban. China is rising in the middle of pandemic despite threats of the West but it has important moral dilemmas that was appeared in Xinjiang (Uyghur region). Russia and Turkey are nowadays two important powers conducting active diplomacy in Caucasus, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Syria. In order to shed new lights on the topic INSAMER researchers examined latest developments in those regions for you. Russia's North Stream, Turkey's approach to Afghanistan and many other articles are amongst the topics you will find out in our latest issue.

Wish you pleasant reading...



Contents

Cover Story

Foreign Policy and the World Order in the Pandemic

page	8	Changes in U.S. Palestine-Israel Policy in the Biden Era	Kadriye SINMAZ
page	12	Secular Extremism in Europe	Abdul Waheed PARRY
page	16	Western Balkans' Criticism on the EU	Emin EMİN
page	20	China, the Rise	Abdul Waheed PARRY
page	24	China's Dilemma: Reflections from Africa and Xinjiang	Dr.Serhat ORAKÇI
page	28	Pandemic Debt	Huthaifah BUSUULWA

Articles

page	32	Nord Stream-2 and Disputes in the Western Alliance	Burak ÇALIŞKAN
page	34	Turkey-Russia Relations: Fluctuations Between Historical Hostility and Strategic Partnership	Mokhmad AKHIYADOV
page	38	The Istanbul Talks and Prospects for Peace in Afghanistan	Huthaifah BUSUULWA
page	42	Post-Soviet Countries: The Geography of Failed Reforms	Şamil AKOĞLU
page	48	Democracy and the Muslim Question in Myanmar	Abdul Waheed PARRY
page	52	Geopolitical Balance in the South Caucasus	Mokhmad AKHIYADOV
page	56	Déby: the Last Victim of Libya Crisis	Dr. Serhat ORAKÇI
page	60	What Shapes Turkey's Thriving Influence in Africa?	Rabiul ISLAM
page	64	Turkish NGOs in Southern Africa	Emre YILDIRIM
page	68	Is Humanitarian Aid's Neutrality in Conflict Areas Possible?	Sueda Nur ÇOKADAR
page	72	PTSD; hidden consequence of the Syrian War	Kenda SHAHERHAWASLI
page	76	PKK/YPG Uses ISIS for International Legitimacy	Riad DOMAZETI
page	80	Inequalities in Global Education	Sueda Nur ÇOKADAR
page	86	Private Security & Military Companies: Privatization of Wars	Huzeyme MOHSEN

JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY
AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

WORLD IN 2021

(JANUARY-JUNE)

Coronavirus cases reached globally over **173 million** level while the pandemic left more than **3.7 million** death since it first started in China's Wuhan. So far, slightly more than **2 billion vaccine** doses have been administered across the world.



Israel's displacement of **Palestinians** in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem and regular assaults to holy **Mosque Al-Aqsa** in Ramadan sparked outcry in occupied Palestine during the holy month Ramadan. Moreover, Israel hit Gaza Strip with **11-day** heavy airstrikes leaving more than **243 people dead**.

1300-foot-long Evergreen container ship, one of the largest container ships in the world, blocked the Suez Canal for 1 week disrupting global trade.



Pope Francis first time-ever visited Iraq's Najaf and met with Shia leader Ali al-Sistani. It was the first ever meeting between Francis and Sistani.



A coup d'état in **Myanmar** removed democratically elected **Aung San Suu Kyi** from power. The coup leaders restored military rule leading to widespread demonstrations across the country.

After a highly controversial presidential election, **Joe Biden** is inaugurated as the 46th President of the United States, becoming the oldest individual to hold the office in the US history.



JANUARY FEBRUARY MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY
AUGUST SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER DECEMBER

TURKEY IN 2021

(JANUARY-JUNE)



Coronavirus cases in Turkey have reached **5.2 million** leaving 50 thousand death while more than **13 million people** were vaccinated with 2 doses across Turkey. Normalization and easing of COVID restrictions started gradually by **1 June** after **17 day-long lockdown**.

Turkey's economy

performed 7% growth in the first quarter of 2021 while the global **economy** is still suffering from the coronavirus pandemic.





Polish defense ministry announced buying 24 armed **Bayraktar TB2** drones from Turkey. By this decision, Poland is becoming the first **NATO** member country to buy Turkish-made drones.

Turkey has intensified diplomatic efforts through UN and OIC in a bid to end the Israeli onslaught on **Gaza** and attacks to **Al-Aqsa Mosque**. Erdogan has held phone talks with the leaders of nearly 20 nations urging the leaders to take a united stance against **Israeli human rights violations**.



Turkish President Erdoğan announces Turkey's withdrawal from the controversial **Istanbul Convention** arguing that the pact conflicted with local traditions of Turkey and that Turkey's own laws provide enough protection for women.

Turkey unveiled its first ever national space program. "The national space program will carry our country to an upper league in the global space race," Erdogan stressed during the official announcement.



CHANGES IN U.S. PALESTINE-ISRAEL POLICY IN THE BIDEN ERA

KADRIYE SINMAZ

In recent years, the Palestinian National Authority has been facing its toughest challenges in history. The main reason for this has been the approach of Donald Trump and US foreign policy under his administration to the Palestinian-Israeli problem. Trump has made historical decisions on Palestinians and Israelis in each year of his presidency. First, he signed the resolution recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, as promised during his campaign, and moved the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. And then he recognized the Golan Heights as the land of Israel. Besides, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) office in Washington was closed, some veteran Palestinian politicians were denied U.S. visas, the consular serving Palestinians in East Jerusalem was closed, and consular affairs were directed to a unit at the U.S. Embassy in Israel.

Palestine has got into a big economic jam because of the Trump administration's policies. In August 2018, The U.S. explained that it had cut both the funding provided to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which supports 6 million refugees, and the \$200 million aid to the Palestinian Authority. Cutting aids were used as blackmail in order to realize the "Deal of the Century" plan, prepared completely through Israeli perspective. The Mahmoud Abbas administration was threatened by an economic crisis to force him to accept the plan aimed at legitimizing the existing occupation and expanding it to further eliminate Palestine.

The Palestinian National Authority has welcomed the last U.S. election because of the loss of Trump, who preferred a pro-Israel U.S. policy, and the victory of Joe Biden,

considered as the continuation of Obama. The Biden administration was believed to prefer a two-state solution and the end of unconditional support for Israel. The decisions taken on Palestine in the first week of Biden's presidency also support this assessment.

On January 26, the acting US envoy to the UN Richard Mills announced in a speech to the Security Council that Biden would reactivate aid to Palestine and reopen Palestinian diplomatic missions that had been closed in the United States.

Mills, who said that the United States will support the two-state solution in the new term, also remarked that Israel's government and the Palestinian Authority should avoid steps that would endanger the two-state solution, such as the annexation of territory, settlement activities, demolitions, incitement to violence, and compensation for individuals imprisoned for acts of terrorism.

The Biden administration welcomed Tor Wennesland for replacing Nickolay Mladenov as UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. Wennesland has extensive experience in the Middle East going back to 1994 when he was Adviser on the Middle East Desk in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the process that led to the Oslo II Agreement. In addition, Biden's call to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about a month after taking office, despite meeting with the leaders of many countries, supported the expectation that a policy that would include Palestinians would be developed. But to say that the Biden administration will be a fair peacemaker between Palestine and Israel in the next four years and take into account the usurped rights of Palestine would be overly optimistic.

The Biden administration is not expected to back down from decisions that are a legacy of the Trump era; the recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli territory, the recognition of Jerusalem as the Israeli capital, and the relocation of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. It is also known that Biden will support the normalization process of Israel's relations with Arab countries. This normalization process strengthens the anti-Iranian front and expands Israel's field of action in the region. Changes in Arab countries' rhetoric about Palestine and a sharp drop in financial aid to

The significant presence of Jews in Biden's family and cabinet also suggests that Israel's interests will be considered in the decisionmaking process

the country suggest that the Abraham Accords may have more negative consequences for Palestinians.

The significant presence of Jews in Biden's family and cabinet also suggests that Israel's interests will be considered in the decision-making process. Biden's three children – both he and his wife are Catholic – are married to Jews. Vice President Kamala Harris' husband Doug Emhoff is also Jewish. Given that Trump's Jewish son-in-law, Jared Kushner, is considered the architect of the U.S. pro-Israel Middle East policy, it is estimated that Jewish members of the Biden family will influence U.S. politics in favor of Israel. Biden, on the other hand,

has also brought Jewish names in strategic positions such as Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary of Homeland Security, Director of National Intelligence, Chief of Staff, and deputy director of the CIA. The introduction of Jews to high-level positions enjoyed wide Israeli press coverage.

Biden's many visits to Israel since the 1970s, his years-long friendship with Netanyahu, and his statements that Israel is the protector



of U.S. interests in the region are situations that may affect Biden's approach to the Palestinian-Israeli problem.

A positive background and experience related to Israel in Biden's political life, the influence of Jews in his immediate vicinity both in his private and professional life, and statements that Israel will continue to receive \$38 billion of annual military aid can lead to deepening cooperation in Israeli-U.S. relations.

Biden will use the language of diplomacy and consider the norms of international law in his policies, unlike Trump, when his reckless support for Israel continued. Established order will be maintained in the relations between the United States and Israel, which have much different and deeper dynamics than the relations between any two countries.

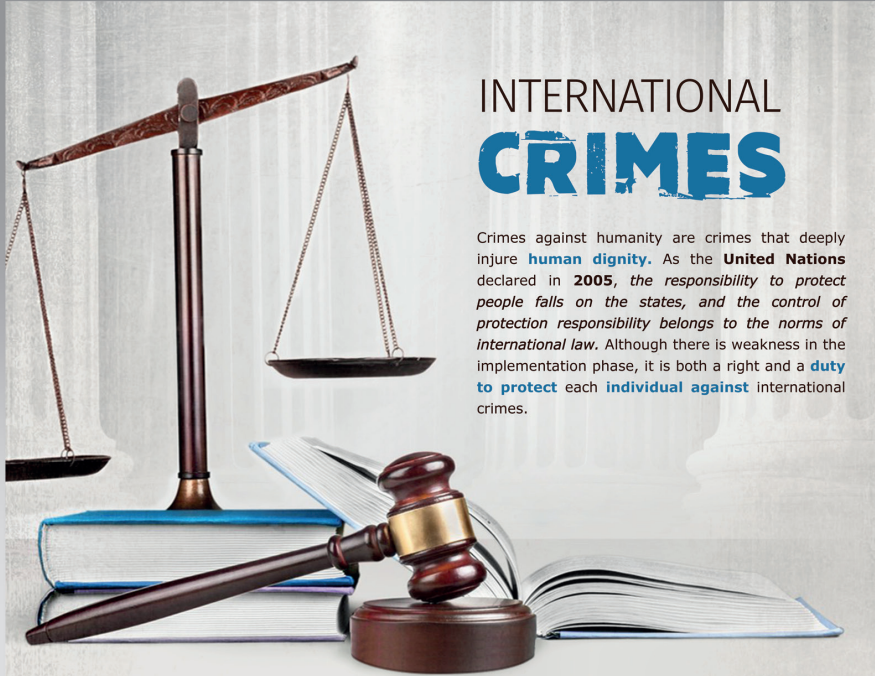
The main issue of Israel-U.S. relations can be tested is the U.S. approach to Iran. During the Trump era, the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal with Iran, the imposition of sanctions against Iran, and the assassination of Qasem Soleimani have escalated tensions in the region and led to the formation of an anti-Iran bloc led by Israel and the Gulf states. Iran's expansionist foreign policy has been considered the main problem in the region, and the defining issues of earlier periods, such as the Palestinian issue, have been ignored. The nuclear deal, which took

effect in the Obama era and was withdrawn in the Trump era, might be reenacted by the Biden administration. However, in the past four years, new dynamics have emerged in the Middle East. Moreover, the results of Iran's presidential elections in June 2021 are vital for the future of U.S.-Iran relations. This is because choosing a radical name will deepen the current tension and polarization in the region. Biden's return to the nuclear deal with the current or future Iranian administration and lifting sanctions on Iran will provoke a backlash from Israel and many Arab countries. In this case, the United States will have to develop a different policy in the Middle East.

The coronavirus pandemic and its economic and social fallouts, and the rising struggle against China in the Pacific, will create the main agenda items of the Biden administration and remove the Middle East from its priority issue. But in the long run, the Biden administration will return to pre-Trump U.S. policy based on a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli problem. The failure to obtain any results from the numerous negotiations over the two-state solution in the past years, and the use of these peace talks by each administration in its interests shows that a durable solution in the region cannot be achieved during Biden's presidency.

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en



INTERNATIONAL CRIMES

Crimes against humanity are crimes that deeply injure **human dignity**. As the **United Nations** declared in **2005**, *the responsibility to protect people falls on the states, and the control of protection responsibility belongs to the norms of international law*. Although there is weakness in the implementation phase, it is both a right and a **duty to protect** each **individual against** international crimes.

GENOCIDE

The intentional action to destroy a **national, ethnic, racial** or **religious** group of people fully or partially by:

- Killing them
- Causing bodily / mental damage
- Deliberate deterioration of living conditions
- Preventing births and applying systematic methods in order to achieve this goal
- Actions such as separating children from their families and other similar practices

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

Systematic crimes with **political, philosophical, racial** or **religious** motives in line with a plan against a segment of the society;

- Killing
- Deliberate injury and torture
- Enslavement
- Exile
- Coercion and rape
- Child abuse
- Restricting freedom
- Using people as subjects for unethical scientific trials
- Other inhumane interventions

WAR CRIMES

- Using poisonous weapons that cause great suffering
- Targeting and destroying settlements without military necessity
- Bombing of vulnerable civil areas for any reason
- Seizure and destruction of schools, places of worship, health, cultural institutions and historical artifacts
- Looting of public or private property

ATTACK

It is the **armed intervention** of a state in violation of international law by referring to the **sovereignty, territorial integrity** and **independence** of another state. One-sided assault is considered an **international crime** with a **"leadership"** aspect that sets the stage for other international crimes.

SECULAR EXTREMISM IN EUROPE

ABDUL WAHEED PARRY

Islamophobia has become a new norm in France. From a larger perspective, it can be seen that Muslim identity is facing negative attitudes in modern Europe. Islam and Muslim communities are increasingly being attacked under the guise of the right to expression. Religious tolerance, pluralism and democracy seem to have lost their meanings in the continent. The treatment towards Islam and Muslim communities in Europe is proving a litmus test to liberty, democratic and pluralistic values which the Western society claims to promote.

Muslim Identity in Europe

The growing discrimination in Europe witnessed a new chapter in the history of secular extremism. There, secular extremism has posed a question on its democratic and secular values; whether Europe could successfully represent its Muslim minority or not. The main challenge for Europe right now is its Muslim representation. Though many Muslim populations are present in Western countries, they are being excluded in Europe in an unusual way. There are many positive liberal voices being raised for Muslim immigrants, but they are very weak. The optimist liberal voices of Europe suggest Muslims not to fear the consequences of prejudice they are subject to in Western societies. They feel that Muslim immigrants can easily assimilate into the European society. Their belief in ideas like tolerance and equality is the basis for their argument that only the extreme right of Europe has problem with Muslims and Islam.

The major challenge for contemporary Europe is the representation of diverse cultures of which Muslims are a significant part right now. Western propagandist media

has coined a new term, the so-called “Muslim question” of present-day Europe. Many European leaders try to address this question by waging wars under the guise of secular ideas. Secular crusades like this will never solve this question. The question requires an answer with a true sense of respect towards the minority cultures within European borders.

Understanding European Identity

Before answering the question of minority representation in Europe hence the representation of Muslim immigrants in particular, one feels a dire need of understanding the European Identity. The very notion that the European identity deals merely with rights, obligations and loyalties towards a nation has complicated this idea of identity further. This discourse of a European identity holds a sense of anxiety towards non-Europeans, excluding them from this identity. Muslims, irrespective of their roots in Asia, Africa or any other part of globe, are excluded from this identity. Muslims may live in Europe but are not



considered of it, even if they may not have migrated to Europe. It is a matter of fact that Muslims from the Balkans are not expected to claim their “Europeanness”, even if they may have adopted secular political institutions. There is a strong perception across Europe that Muslims are external to the essence of Europe. “For both liberals and the extreme right the representation of “Europe” takes the form of a narrative, one of whose effects is to exclude Islam. I do not mean by this that both sides are equally hostile toward Muslims living in Europe. Nor do I assume that Muslim immigrants are in no way responsible for their practical predicament. I mean only that for liberals no less than for the extreme right, the narrative of Europe points to the idea of an unchangeable essence.”

For many Western scholars, “civilization” is not a fashionable term to which Europe could be referred. Instead they insist on certain experiences which Europeans share. Michael Wintle is one among such scholars who object the term “civilization” to be applied to Europe. “To talk in terms of a quintessential or single European culture, civilization, or identity leads quickly to unsustainable generalization, and to all manner of heady and evidently false claims for one’s own continent. Nonetheless, if the triumphalism can be left to one side there is a long history of shared influences and experiences, a heritage, which has not touched all parts of Europe or all Europeans equally, and which is therefore hard and perhaps dangerous to define in single sentences or even paragraphs,



but which is felt and experienced in varying ways and degrees by those whose home is Europe, and which is recognized—whether approvingly or disapprovingly—by many from outside.”

Western scholars insist that real Europeans carry particular identities from their history, experiences and religion. Without them, people living in Europe carry ambiguous identities. This is the reason that many people are excluded from the European identity and not all inhabitants of Europe are considered European.

“Completely external to “European history” is medieval Spain. Although Spain is now defined geographically as part of Europe, Arab Spain from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries is seen as being outside “Europe,” in spite of the numerous intimate connections and exchanges in the Iberian Peninsula during that period between Muslims, Christians, and Jews.”

The Muslim Other

Europe staunchly believes that there is a civilizational difference between Islam and the West. Yet they expect Muslims to shed their civilizational identity and allow the absolute assimilation of Muslims to Western civilization. Paradoxically, the West denies that Islam has its own essence and at the same time blames Islam of hostility towards all non-Muslims. Islam is considered as the primary “other” to the European society. This alleged rivalry towards all non-Muslims

Western scholars insist that real Europeans carry particular identities from their history, experiences and religion. Without them, people living in Europe carry ambiguous identities.

and Christians in particular then becomes the basis of a European identity. The West believes that human beings can be separated from their histories and traditions. This belief makes it possible for Western philosophers to urge for Europeanization of Muslim immigrants and the Islamic world. This logic is invoked for the assimilation of Muslim immigrants into European civilization.

The most powerful tool of the West is European capitalism and its strategic interests. The West thinks that the representation of Europe’s borders is merely a symbolic representation. They believe European capitalism cannot be confined to the European continent. Fortunately the industrial revolution enabled Europe to encompass the entire globe and administer it. In this process Islam is being portrayed as the only “other” to the European identity.

European Liberal Democracy and Muslims

The possibilities of representing Muslim minorities in modern European states are decreasing every passing day. The basic ideology of political representation in liberal democracies makes it difficult if not impossible to represent Muslims as Muslims. This ideology propagates that citizens who constitute a democratic state belong to a class that is defined only by what is common to all its members only. This commonality

between individual citizens makes it possible to separate them from their historical and religious identities. All minorities are divided into groups that have only numerical value.

Theoretically, it is very easy to argue that historical and religious narratives that constitute identities can be deconstructed or fully destroyed. Practically it is very difficult to challenge such narratives. Europe must respect these historical and religious narratives. Weaker groups like Muslim minorities should be given more space. They must be able to find institutional representation as a minority in a democratic state they live in.

If the European Identity cannot be expressed in terms of a diverse society, which allows multiple ways for different identities to flourish, it may be termed as the failure of secular democratic ideas. In recent times this brute secularism and Euro-centrism has become the main part of the problem. It is our civic and political duty to reject secular extremism. Muslims across the world must condemn and criticize the extremists who manipulate their religion in the name of fighting the evils of the modern secular Europe. We as Muslims must not allow anyone to disrespect our faith at the hands of a few violent secular extremists.

End Notes

¹ Talal Asad, "Muslims and European Identity", *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge NY, 2001)

² Michael Wintle, "Cultural Identity in Europe: Shared Experience," in M. Wintle, ed., *Culture and Identity in*

Europe (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996)

³ Talal Asad, "Muslims and European Identity", *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, Cambridge University Press, (Cambridge NY, 2001)



WESTERN BALKANS' CRITICISM ON THE EU

EMİN EMİN

Public criticism on the EU is a new and unprecedented development in Western Balkans politics. Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama for instance stated that the EU treats Western Balkans countries as second-class entities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić also criticized the union, after it left the Western Balkans alone in the early stages of Coronavirus, and its aid came long after Chinese and Russians aid arrived early in the region. Vučić stated that “European solidarity does not exist”, calling it “a fairy tale on paper”.

Statements of these two leaders represent a significant reversal of what has been said so far about the EU's image in the region. There are different reasons behind the hike of such criticism.

First of all, the protracted EU accession process has led to a decline in the beliefs of Western Balkans countries that they would become member states at any time in the future. For example in 2020, none of the six Western Balkan countries made



any significant progress in the European integration process. It is true that the Balkan countries could have done more in their part, but this still raises the question of whether the process itself “works” since many countries do not progress for decades.

It is wrong, even a nonsensical assumption of some EU member states, that the longer the negotiations last, the more prepared the country will be when it joins. A very simple explanation for this is that the countries that are still far from gaining future membership would not make their maximum effort to do their homework. When Juncker said in 2014 that the EU would not expand for the next five years, Western Balkan countries immediately reduced its efforts and this reflected on the negotiations progress. Why do something in 2015, when there will be no promising rewards by 2020?

Another point of criticism on the EU is that most countries in the region are “handed over” with security instability and complete political and economic dependence on the West. Meanwhile, in the prevailing diplomatic discourse, the stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans are viewed in the context of two integration processes: NATO and EU membership. There is a stereotype that these processes would stabilize and motivate the democratic, economic, social and security transformation and planned

Europeanization of the countries in the region.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the EU’s decision to restrict the export of certain medical supplies to countries outside it has also affected its image in the Balkans. The absence of aid from the EU, of which the Western Balkan countries – with undeveloped health systems and weak economies – needed assistance, has turned the region once again into an arena for rising non-western political, economic, and military powers seeking to extend their influence.

At that moment, the EU’s failure to take rapid steps in the distribution of vaccines, even banning its export to Western Balkans, has caused criticism towards it. Although EC President Ursula Von der Leyen reiterated that Western Balkan countries do not have a EU mechanism to restrict the export of vaccines – i.e. companies that comply with EU agreements can export vaccines to this part of Europe – there are no hopes that the vaccines will immediately arrive in Western Balkans.

News of Macedonia’s recent blockade over a bilateral dispute with Bulgaria has unleashed a new injection of hopelessness into EU-Western Balkans relations. Bulgaria’s position is very reminiscent of the stubbornness of Greece, which has kept Macedonia under a blockade for a whole decade. As the debate

Another point of criticism on the EU is that most countries in the region are “handed over” with security instability and complete political and economic dependence on the West.



continues, North Macedonian Prime Minister Zoran Zaev, who gave up his name for the sake of including his country to become a EU and NATO member state, expressed negative emotions towards the EU if the issue of Macedonian identity is at stake.

While all this is happening and we are constantly receiving negative signals from the region, it is claimed that Montenegro can become a EU member in 2025 if it realizes

all its reforms. Montenegro appears to have received assurances from Brussels that it could become part of the EU if it fulfills its duties. Similar guarantees were also given to North Macedonia and Albania. Such guarantees were given to Kosovo for visa liberalization. However, all promises made have been delayed for now. Nonetheless, something serious and necessary needs to be improved in the European Union's relations with the Western Balkans for the desired enlargement to be truly believed.

End Notes

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_21_505

Kosovo goes to elections once again in mid-February. However, what has happened in the last **two years** reveals the complex relationship between **political instability and court decisions** in the country.

Kosovo goes to elections once again in mid-February. However, what has happened in the last **two years** reveals the complex relationship between **political instability and court decisions** in the country.

Following the fall of the government, the Constitutional Court of Kosovo temporarily suspended the **task of establishing a new government** and decided to go for election.

MAY 1, 2020

JUNE 6, 2020

The coalition government led by **Avdullah Hoti** was formed with 61 votes in a 120-seat parliament.

JANUARY 20, 2021

Kosovo Central Election Commission has decided that **Vetevendosje leader Albin Kurti**, who is considered certain to be Prime Minister according to polls, will not be a candidate in the parliamentary elections because he was convicted in the past three years.

CHINA, THE RISE

ABDUL WAHEED PARRY

China is a rising power and its importance in world affairs represents key changes in global power dynamics. China's rise in Asian affairs especially is a challenge for the US and its allies. China's economic success is its main reason to play a greater role on the international stage. Besides being a recognized regional power, China has proved itself as a global power as well. The growing trade relations and security ties within Asia are evident that China has grown more prominence in regional politics.

Introduction

Similarly, the signing of agreements on environmental protection and public health shows China has successfully invested in active diplomacy. The more interesting feature of this active diplomacy is the positive way China has dealt with its neighbors. It seems that most Asian region has received China's activism wholeheartedly. With its continuous efforts China has succeeded in moderating the fears of its neighbors by adopting an approach aligned with economic and security interests of the region. This positive diplomacy has been successful, most notably in trade, where China is speedily emerging as an engine of regional economic growth.

There is much more to do for China to advance itself as a regional leader. More focus on its policies in issues such as health, the environment and human rights is needed to have an effective impact on the region.

There is a need to assess the scope and implications of China's development in Asia and the world. Many will assess and focus on China's strengths, undertakings and features of its diplomacy in Asia.

Yet balanced assessment will require a wide-range of study on China's strengths and weaknesses, as well as clear views of determinants influencing its policies in Asia and other parts of the world. Moreover, awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of other powers and influences in the region and across the globe, especially those exerted by the US, also needs to be looked at.

China's Rise

China's rise must be essentially seen as a political process. The ruling Communist Party worked on legitimizing its rule through a course of different aspects. The party realized that performance-based legitimacy is the only way to prolong its rule. For the party, performance-based economic development became the synonym of politics in China. Economic development led to China's political stability and overall prosperity. China's rise is perceived as a threat by many, the US being at the top of the list. Countries like Japan and India in nearest region share this view.

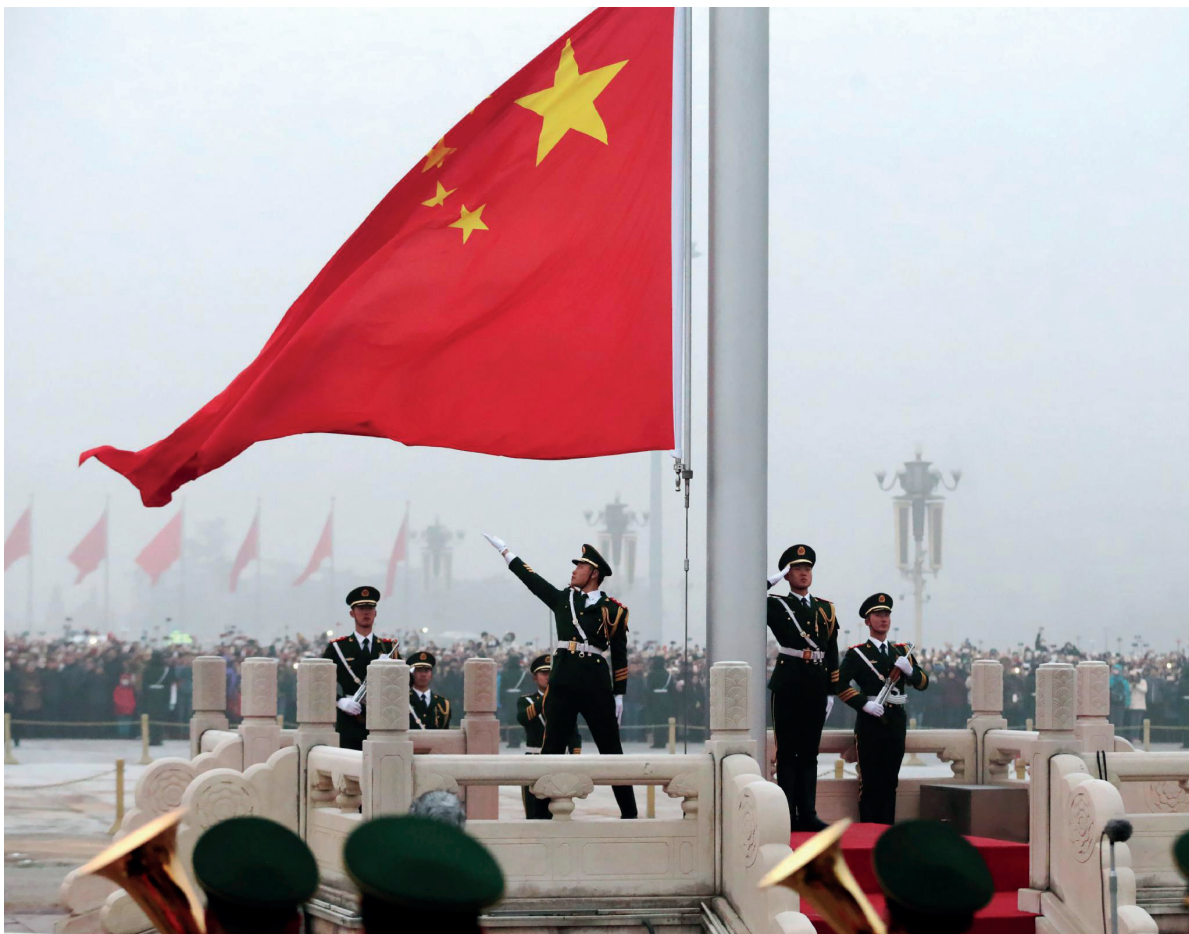
The American concern mainly arises from its hegemony in world politics. China's

emergence as a global power may challenge US hegemony. The pace of China's economic growth has convinced the world that it is only a matter of time before China emerges as a global power.

Neighboring countries have realized that they have more beneficial role to play vis-a-vis China. China's economic growth has forced them to be very careful in handling their relationship with the country. China is a gigantic country. It consumes a tremendous amount of foreign direct investment and pops out a huge volume of exports. Other countries are faced with China's competition within the economic fold. No government in Asia has adopted an anti-China policy. China's increasing

economic growth has caused concerns among many nations in the world. India is covertly being used by world super powers to contain Chinese influence, which seems to have failed badly. The recent faceoff between the two countries in disputed Jammu and Kashmir's Ladakh region is one such example, where India lost more than 20 soldiers in a single scuffle. China is trying to calm down the growing concerns about its future endeavors.

"The combination of stunning economic growth and unpredictable political governance causes deep concerns about China among the nations in the world. The Chinese leadership has realized the urgency to calm down these concerns and to build



a supportive international environment for its ascendancy. To make its rise less a threat, the Chinese government has sponsored many PR events, such as exhibitions in foreign countries, promoting Chinese language programs, and so on.”

China in response has been talking about its policies based on the idea of peace. The thesis of “China’s peaceful rise” is a clear message to the world in this regard. The policy would mean that first, China’s development depends upon and in return will contribute to world peace; second, China will resort to peaceful means for development; third, China’s development will rely more on its own resources and market; fourth, China is prepared for a long-term process of hard work, even several generations, for economic prosperity. Finally, even as China has achieved its economic development, it will not seek hegemony in the world or come out as a threat to any country.

China is committed to its “China’s peaceful rise” policy. Its success is clearly gained with the help of this policy. It has made strategic partnerships with the EU, Russia and other second-tier-powers. China has promoted the “good neighbor policy” in Asia. It has increased trade relations within its neighboring region. The Belt-Road initiative, CPEC and many development projects etc. have paved China’s way to strengthen its ties with its neighbors. China has positioned itself as an important trading partner with these countries. Besides,

China has entered into various mechanisms of regional cooperation with the countries.

On the other hand, China is determined to increase its military capabilities. The

balance of global power has been shifting rapidly largely due to China’s rise in its military might. The rise in China’s military power will not only affect the balance in Asia, it will have a great impact in the changing dynamics of world power politics.

“According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), while the U.S. defense expenditure declined by 15 percent and Japan’s increased by only 2 percent between 2009 and 2019, China’s defense spending increased by 85 percent in the same period. In absolute terms, the United States still remained in first place globally, with \$732 billion spent in 2019, and China was in second place with \$261 billion. However, it must be noted that while the U.S. military is globally committed and

has been engaged in conflicts in the Middle East, the Chinese military is only regionally engaged and has not fought in a major conflict in the past four decades. When one considers the long-term trends, it is clear that in the future it will be difficult for the United States to keep competing with China on military spending.”

The third important factor concerning the global structure especially the US is China’s ideological orientation. China is being projected as an ideological “China threat”. Western scholars have been writing

China is committed to its “China’s peaceful rise” policy. Its success is clearly gained with the help of this policy. It has made strategic partnerships with the EU, Russia and other second-tier-powers.

on this subject extensively. One example is Samuel Huntington. According to Huntington, China's cultural factor along with Islamic civilization is a threat for Western cultural hegemony. In his book, "The Clash of Civilizations", Huntington writes that the "unholy alliance between Islamic and Confucian civilizations" is the most fundamental threat to the West. China has termed this "China threat" perception as an international bullying. The Chinese often suspect that the US and Japan are the originators of the "China threat" arguments.

The Wuhan-origin pandemic that was supposed to give a serious blow to the Communist regime has surprisingly provided China with an opportunity to further its goals. China is the only

American rival enjoying an upper hand on geopolitical grounds since the Vietnam War. China, with the help of smart policies, has succeeded to buy allies within the developing countries. It has also succeeded in gaining access within the power centers of its rival America.

However, in the last few years, China has successfully expanded its diplomatic and economic relationships. By launching new institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, China has positioned itself as a donor of much-needed public goods through policies like the vast amounts of infrastructure investment through the Belt and Road Initiative.

End Notes

¹ <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/chinas-rise-as-a-military-power-a-view-from-tokyo/>

² <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/college/coll-china-politics-007.html>



CHINA'S DILEMMA: REFLECTIONS FROM AFRICA AND XINJIANG

DR.SERHAT ORAKÇI

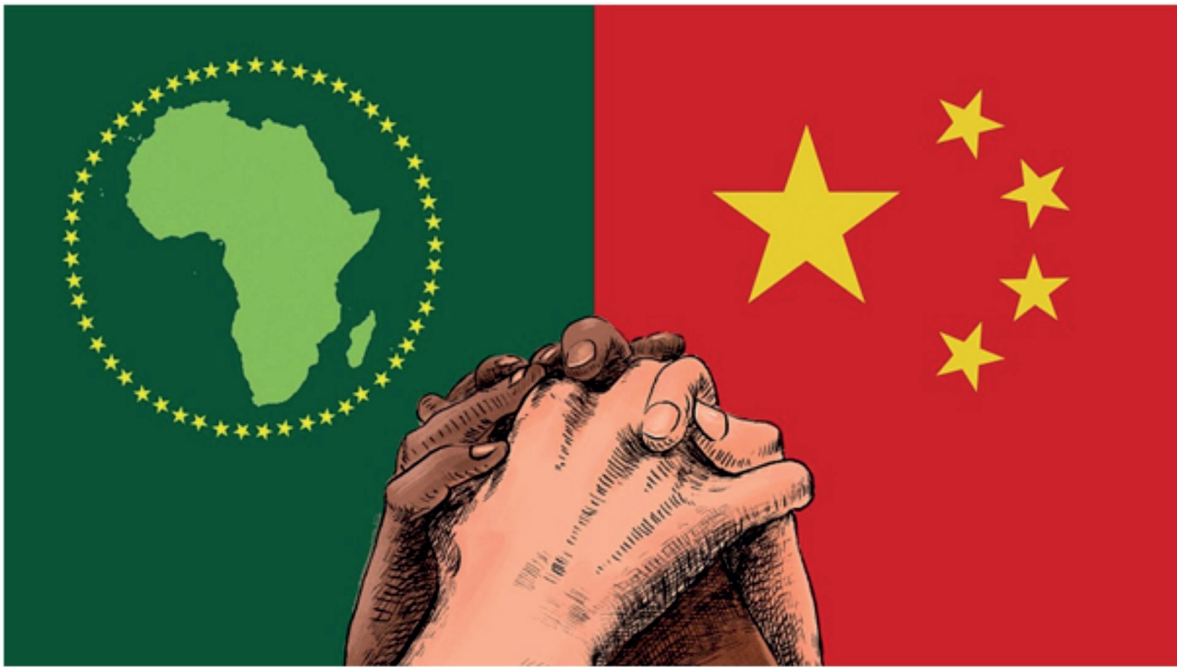
For decades, China's been an assimilating power in Xinjiang (Uyghur Autonomous Region). On the other hand, it's been showing a more positive face on the African continent with its soft power instruments. While we witness China's economic expansion in the 21st century, its moral standing is explicitly perplexing. Frankly, China's image in Xinjiang is far from its image in Africa.

Although China's engagement in Africa has become more alerting for African nations due to its debt trap narrative, the country has become a giant investor on the continent in the last two decades. As documented by Western media, China-Africa bilateral trade relations have recently surpassed 200 billion dollars. Notably, Chinese cash flow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into African countries finally made China a top investor there. As Chinese media network expands in Africa, negative statements towards China have now become a taboo for African leaders. Chinese state institutions work to build a positive image in Africa where Chinese companies invest in mining and petroleum sector ranging from oil, natural gas, gold, diamond, to copper just to name a few. It is not a secret that today China is the biggest buyer of Angolan, Sudanese, Nigerian oil and Zambian copper.

From its measures in limiting Taiwan's diplomatic opening to Africa, it is safe to say that China's ambitions in Africa go beyond economic expectations. China does not hesitate from pressuring African leaders not

to recognize Taiwan. In this regard, the recent agreement between Taiwan and Somaliland containing cooperation in various sectors such as agriculture, energy, fisheries, mining, public health, education and ICT has sparked outcry in China.

China's economic expansion in Africa goes parallel with its increasing cultural presence. Chinese cultural centers and Confucius Institutes for example are now all over the continent. The African youth can learn the Mandarin language and become familiar with Chinese cultural events and films. Moreover, China aims to include Mandarin in African schools even though there has been opposition to this idea. However, the Confucius Institute opened up 54 centers across the continent. It would not matter, of course, if China had showed its respect to other cultural forms as much as it expected respect for its own culture. Now we all know that China's policy in Xinjiang aims to erase the entire culture of the Uyghurs. So, on a moral basis there is a big dilemma for China in seeking a clear path to become the world's leading super power.



At home, we obviously see another face of China's pathological state policies. Nowadays it became clear that China is applying its assimilation program in Xinjiang against the Uyghur people. The ruthless face of China appears in the detention camps, which are presented under the banner of "re-education" camps. The Uyghurs keep asking the Chinese state about the whereabouts of their kins and relatives. Religious restrictions and ethno-cultural cleansing of minority groups cannot be hidden under cheap antiterrorism propaganda. The Uyghur people reveal the real face of China to the world through social media contents.

China is dreaming to create "One China" in which all different ethnic and religious

China is dreaming to create "One China" in which all different ethnic and religious minorities are assimilated - willingly or unwillingly - by state policies.

minorities are assimilated - willingly or unwillingly - by state policies. On the contrary, this trial is triggering the revival of ethnic and religious identities as past experiences of humanity have demonstrated. Multiculturalist Bhikhu Parekh ironically indicates that culture is a powerful element for human beings and a real cultural assimilation might actually mean a biological assimilation since a tiny part of a culture might be enough for its rebirth.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has recently accused China for its serious human rights violations. Approximately 1 million Uyghurs have being detained in camps by China. China's human rights violations continue with the



Chinese government forcibly sterilizing Uyghur women and imposing forced labor despite international condemnations. China's stubborn act once again demonstrates China's dilemma in front of the global audience in terms of basic values of humanity. This black scene actually shows that China's policies are quite close to colonialism. Therefore, China is rising, but it is rising as a new colonial power of the 21st century.

While some countries prefer to remain silent or neutral against China's crime in Xinjiang, countries such as the US, Dutch and Canadian parliaments have recognized China's ruthless policy towards the Uyghurs as genocide and crimes against humanity. The US officials have remarked terms such as "forced assimilation" and "cleansing of an ethno-religious minority group". However, the West's timely approach towards the

Uyghurs just shows another branch of hypocrisy since previously they stayed silent for China's crimes due to their strategic interests. The rise of China forced the West to look at the world with fresh eyes. For that, the Western powers must be willing to re-design their bilateral relations with Africa in a new context rather than viewing the continent as the "white man's burden".

Finally, African countries have more alternatives nowadays in designing their relations with foreign countries. Along with long-established partners, African leaders would like to work with China in favor of getting low-interest loans. However, Africa should still be aware of China's human rights violations. China's brutal policy towards the Uyghurs is reflecting well the hard face of China.

End Notes

¹ Abhishek Mishra, "Taiwan's Africa outreach irks China", Observer Research Foundation (ORF), 29 August 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/taiwans-africa-outreach-irks-china/>

² Bob Wekesa, "What Do the US and China Want From Africa?", The Diplomat, 1 March 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/what-do-the-us-and-china-want-from-africa/>

³ Bhikhu Parekh, *Çokkültürlülüğü Yeniden Düşünmek* (B. Tanrıseven, Çev.). Ankara: Phoenix, 2002

⁴ "China doubles down on Uyghur Muslims with harsh prosecutions: HRW", Daily Sabah, 24 February 2021, <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/asia-pacific/china-doubles-down-on-uyghur-muslims-with-harsh-prosecutions-hrw>

⁴ Edward Wong & Chris Buckley, "U.S. Says China's Repression of Uighurs Is 'Genocide'", The New York Times, 19 January 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/us/politics/trump-china-xinjiang.html>

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

International Humanitarian Law, the first of which based on the **Geneva Conventions** signed in **1864**, constitutes the laws during the war for the protection of individuals who did not participate in the conflict or remained out of conflict.

While resorting to armed force until the end of the **First World War** was not regarded as an illegal act; with the establishment of the United Nations, the approach that **regards war as illegal has been accepted**. Thus, it has become the responsibility of the international community to remind humanitarian rules.

WHAT IS IT?

- It aims to protect the most basic **right for humans** to live in conflict and violence regions. It is also known as the laws of war.
- It aims to minimize the possible concerns about human life by limiting the ways and methods used by the parties in **wars and conflicts**.
- It is based on three important legal corpuses known as the **Geneva Conventions, The Hague Conventions** and the **Rome Statute**.

BASIC RULES OF IHL

- Parties at conflict should distinguish between combatants and civilians. They should never harm **civilian entities**.
- Combatants who surrender cannot be **killed or injured**.
- Parties to a conflict do not have an unlimited choice of **methods and means** of warfare.
- **The sick and wounded** can be taken from the conflict area and taken care of by their side.
- Health facilities, employees, clergy and assets with the relevant symbols shall be **protected in all circumstances**.
- The lives, honor and pride, religion and beliefs of the prisoners, whether militants or civilians, **shall not be touched**.



PANDEMIC DEBT

HUTHAIFAH BUSUULWA

As the novel coronavirus swiftly spreads, governments started to initiate policies to combat it. One way of doing it was to impose strict lockdowns. One by one, countries closed their economies, shuttering activity and in many ways halting projects and progresses. Governments and companies alike were forced to look for credit facilities to stay afloat; debts upon debts were acquired, so much so that lending and credit dispensation levels are unprecedented. Before the vaccine is rolled out widely, it is expected that the economic situation may only get worse before it can start stabilizing. The question with this dire situation is what will be the cost of these unprecedented borrowing levels in the near, mid and long term?

For developing countries especially those in Africa, the pandemic and the resultant loans could not have come at a worse time. Debt levels relative to the GDP have been increasing at a worrying speed, threatening a return to that in the 1980s when debt reached over 270 billion dollars, about 107 percent of the GNP. By 2018, 40 percent of African countries were already at high risk of debt distress. Yet as the pandemic struck, many of these countries rushed to rack up even more debt. Uganda for example secured loans totaling 888 million US dollars to fight the coronavirus as well as to fill spending gaps. This included among others 300 million from the World Bank and 491.5 millions from the IMF. Kenya, Uganda's neighbor to the east received over 788 million dollars in loans from the IMF and World Bank. It is now projected that Kenya's public debt will reach 69.8 percent of GDP by 2023. For such countries, high levels of debt means that a significant portion of national revenues goes

towards debt servicing, curtailing human and economic development as key sectors become underfunded. This in turn will halt progress at sustainable development and poverty eradication. Failure to pay sufficient attention to sectors such as education, health and infrastructures could eventually have long-term consequences.

The rich countries may not be spared too. The pandemic has already forced wealthy countries to rack up so much debt that paying it back could have significant long lasting effects on the global economy. For instance, the United States' public debt was estimated at 23.08 trillion dollars in November last year. This year alone it has grown by over 4.4 trillion dollars to about 27.45 trillion U.S dollars. According to IMF estimates, advanced economies alone will run an average deficit of 11 percent of GDP this year and their public debt could run to 66 trillion US dollars, which might be 122 percent of GDP by year's end even if there were no more lockdowns imposed.

The IMF is currently availing a quarter of its lending capacity of 1 trillion dollars to member countries. So far 63.809.66 million dollars have been approved during the pandemic, although the largest portion of which is expected to go to developing countries.

There are about three defined paths from which governments may choose to ameliorate the debt burden. They can pay the debt using taxation. But this could face considerable political repercussions. It would for instance involve raising taxes and cutting spending, both of which could upset at least some people. Austerity measures such as those enacted after the 2007-2009 financial crisis and those in countries like Italy and Greece faced a lot of public resistance, resulting in political instabilities as evidenced by numerous short-term government changes. When post-pandemic time comes, the public may favor increased rather than reduced expenditures on sectors such as health.

The second way governments may ameliorate the burden would be to opt not to pay back the debts, by seeking cancellation or restructuring. However this path may limit the countries' access to future financing facilities in the global



The pandemic has already forced wealthy countries to rack up so much debt that paying it back could have significant long lasting effects on the global economy.

financial markets, a cost so high that even countries such as Kenya have opted not to participate in initiatives such as the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) over concerns that it would impact its access to international financial markets.

But the alternative is to pay the sometimes-high interest rates, further limiting the country's resource envelope. Countries could also opt to wait, or roll over the debts in the hope that they will shrink as the economy grows over time. This may be done in the hope that the real economy and inflation will be able

to grow above the interest rates. Inflation in this sense helps wash away some debt. But inflation would lead to disruptions in the economy to the disadvantage of the poor. Instead of the required inflation, deflation may be experienced due to debt overhang—as the debts sap the economy out of demand.



Corporate companies too are racking up credit as cheap loans are extended to help them keep afloat. Government stimulus packages and financial institutions have extended trillions in credit to corporations and SMEs. For now, it seems the largest corporations are swimming in liquidity. According to the Economist, cash held by the world's 3000 most valuable companies have exploded to 7.6 trillion dollars from 5.7 trillion dollars last year. The debt level of non-financial business sector in the US alone increased by about 20 percent relative to GDP and it now stands at a record high of 130 percent of the GDP (Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System 2020). The pandemic has pushed business debt ratios higher, yet earnings are falling, thus risks debt overhang. According to the recently published paper by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, the economic costs of corporate debt booms rise with inefficient

debt restructuring and liquidation, likely resulting in corporate zombies.

In a nutshell, impacts of the pandemic may linger long after it ends. But now, that too looks like a distant dream. Despite several vaccines being authorized in the developed world, there are fears that it could take up to 2024 to have inoculations wide enough to cover significant portions of the world's population. Already, rich countries have hoarded more than half of possible vaccines, leaving the developing world with limited hopes of ending the pandemic in their own countries. The only alternative may be to keep strict lockdown measures for considerable periods of time to curtail the spread of the virus, a decision which would require even more debt to sustain livelihoods and finance budgetary shortfalls; otherwise not doing so may result in further loss of lives, and a future irredeemably bleak, at least in the short to medium term.

End Notes

¹ Ssuuna Robert, Kenya, Covid-19 and Debt, European Network on Debt and Development, published 05 November 2020. Eurodad.org

² Statista, Public debt of the United States of America from November 2019 to November 2020, by month (in billion U.S. dollars)

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/273294/public-debt-of-the-united-states-by-month/#:~:text=In%20November%2020%2C%20the%20public,around%2023.08%20trillion%20U.S.%20dollars>

³ "The Economist, What would Keynes do? The pandemic will leave the rich world deep in debt, and force some hard choices Who takes the pain, and can there be gain Briefing Apr 23rd 2020 edition

<https://www.economist.com/briefing/2020/04/23/>

the-pandemic-will-leave-the-rich-world-deep-in-debt-and-force-some-hard-choices

⁴ ibid

⁵ The Economist, A year of raising furiously: Companies have raised more capital in 2020 than ever before What now? Dec 9th 2020 edition

https://www.economist.com/business/2020/12/09/companies-have-raised-more-capital-in-2020-than-ever-before?utm_campaign=the-economist-this-week&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_source=salesforce-marketing-cloud&utm_term=2020-12-10&utm_content=ed-picks-article-link-2&etear=nl_weekly_2

⁶ Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Working Paper Series, Zombies at large? Corporate debt overhang and the macroeconomy, 2020

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS

Our water resources, forming the basis of life, are under threat. We need urgent action plans to protect endangered resources.



More than **40%** of the world's population is affected by **water shortage**.

About **50 COUNTRIES** suffer from **water shortage**.

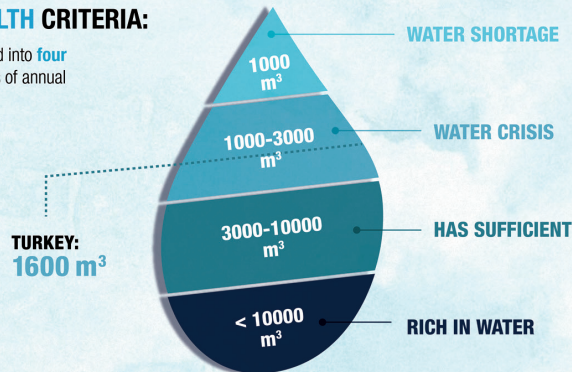
Unless the **NECESSARY** measures are taken, water-related problems will **increase even more**.



It is reported that the lives of more than **3 BILLION PEOPLE** depend on the **biodiversity of the sea** and **coasts**.

WATER WEALTH CRITERIA:

Countries are divided into **four categories** in terms of annual per capita usage:



WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

- **Environmental awareness** should be strengthened, and interventions that harm the **ecosystem** should be avoided.
- **Waste prevention policies, campaigns and trainings** should be increased.
- **Reforestation and forests conservation** efforts should be **continued with precision**.
- In **metropolitan cities** especially, construction of more **concrete buildings** should be prevented.
- The number of **purification facilities** (treatment) should be increased and solutions in this field should be **enriched with new technology**.



NORD STREAM-2 AND DISPUTES IN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE

BURAK ÇALIŞKAN

Destabilizing the relations between the USA and its European allies and the European Union is among Russia's main foreign policy goals. To this end, Moscow is trying to improve its bilateral relations with different EU countries. Germany and Russia tried to complete the Nord Stream-2 project despite USA's objection. This points to an important break in the Western alliance system. Critics believe that Russia's effort to carry out a new energy project when Russia was accused of harming European security would increase Europe's dependence on Moscow.

Nord Stream Projects

Following Moscow's invasion on Crimea in 2014, the West decided to impose many sanctions on Russia. While Russia's important sectors such as railways, shipping, metals and mining were targeted during President Donald Trump's term, a law was enacted to restrict businesses between foreign companies and Russian oil companies. This decision resulted in an important separation between the USA and the EU, especially with Germany and France. While the relations of these states with Russia in the process drew USA's reaction, European companies declared that they would be damaged due to the USA-enacted law. The Nord Stream and Nord Stream-2 projects in particular would seriously damage these relationships.

In parallel with the Nord Stream Project that was announced to enable all natural gas capacity usage in 2017, preparations for the Nord Stream-2 natural gas pipeline

began in 2018. The construction of the line to be established between Narva in Russia and Greifward in Germany started in May 2018. The USA, Ukraine, Poland and Baltic countries react to the project, which is projected to have an annual transport capacity of 55 billion cubic meters just like the first one. The USA continues to warn of sanctions on European companies working on the project. The USA, which was against the first project, planned to sell its shale gas especially to Europe as an alternative to Russian natural gas, but European countries did not approach this project positively due to the costs.

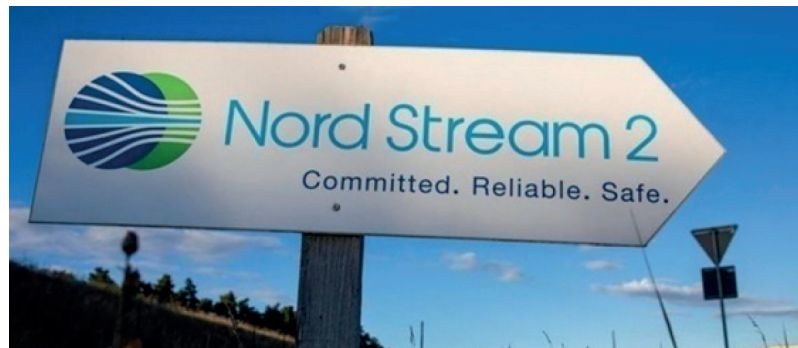
As the natural gas transit contract between Russia and Ukraine expired at the end of 2019, Moscow planned to complete the project on this date, but failed. Had Moscow succeeded, Ukraine would have lost an important source of income, and the strategic importance of this country to the West would diminish. However, with the sanctions imposed on the project partners, the USA prevented the process from being

completed on time. At this point, Moscow had to sit with Ukraine to avoid any problems with the European countries regarding natural gas shipment. Ukraine subsequently signed a 5-year transit agreement with Russia.

Questioned Alliance

Although studies on the Nord Stream-2 project continue after this agreement, uncertainty regarding NATO and French President Emmanuel Macron's statement that "NATO was brain dead" in 2019 was also met with reaction from the United States. At some point, the concept of alliance, which experienced a significant change in the post-Cold War period, began to be questioned.

The attitude shown within the framework of the Russia-Ukraine crisis is the most important example that needs to be examined. Germany and France, which had an intense relationship with Kiev before 2014, displayed a rather passive attitude during and after the Crimean occupation. These two states, apparently imposing sanctions against Russia, have developed cooperation with Moscow in both energy and trade. This situation causes a decrease in the economic



It can be stated that there has been a change in the approach of decision makers in Germany and France in seeing Russia as a threat - different from the Cold War period - especially in recent years.

and diplomatic support enjoyed by Ukraine prior to 2014.

After all, it can be stated that there has been a change in the approach of decision makers in Germany and France in seeing Russia as a threat - different from the Cold War period - especially in recent years. As a matter of fact, this situation is not seen as a problem in Germany, which meets almost half of its natural gas needs from Russia and will increase this dependency even more with Nord Stream-2. Instead of collaborating with NATO member Turkey, Germany cooperates with Russia in crisis areas such as France, Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean

and Nagorno-Karabakh. This inconsistent foreign policy creates a major crack both within the EU and in the Western alliance system in general.



TURKEY-RUSSIA RELATIONS: FLUCTUATIONS BETWEEN HISTORICAL HOSTILITY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

MOKHMAD AKHIYADOV

Turkey-Russia five century-old relations are on one hand filled with a history of war; on the other full of intense trade and cultural relations. While the disagreements between the two countries stem from geopolitical competition in certain regions, the economy, trade and especially the energy sector continue to be the main areas of cooperation.

However, it cannot be said that the governments of the two countries make a clear distinction between their political and economic interests. Because while the deepening of economic cooperation brings positive results in bilateral relations, various regional disagreements between the two countries may break their economic ties. The most obvious example of this was experienced in Turkey's downing of a Russian military plane in 2015. Given the political and economic instability in the regions around Russia and Turkey, as well as the relations between both countries in regions such as Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria, and Libya, it becomes clear that Turkey-Russia relations will have to pass important tests in the coming period.

Since its establishment, Turkey-Russia relations have gone through many obstacles. One of them emerged at the end of the 20th century, when the USSR collapsed. During this period, rapid changes began in the relations between the two countries. In the 1990s, the transformation of Turkey-Russia relations was inevitable. Because with the collapse of the

USSR, new regional opportunities arose for Turkish foreign policy and consequently Turkey began to pursue an active foreign policy towards the newly independent countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Thus, in the 1990s, Turkey-Russia relations were evaluated on their activities in these two regions.

This naturally led to a new geopolitical competition and tension in relations between Turkey and Russia. Because Russia, which believes that it has vital interests in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, is an actor that historically had political, military and economic influence on these regions.

Yet by the end of the 1990s, the leaderships of the two countries, despite the existing mutual rivalry in many issues, began to develop relations in areas where their interests coincide. This was undoubtedly an area of economy in general, especially in the energy sector. In this context, the early 2000s – when Vladimir Putin was elected president in Russia and the Justice and Development Party won the elections in Turkey – can be defined as a period of accelerating transition from competition to a



multifaceted partnership in relations between the two countries. Since then, issues of bilateral relations considered to have a negative impact (the struggle for the independence of Chechnya, the Kurdish issue and Turkey's policy in Central Asia and the Caucasus) were removed from the agenda, instead they began to discuss such issues as the security of the Black Sea and the construction of energy pipelines.

As a result of these and similar events, by the 2010s, both Turkey and Russia agreed that they could move from a multifaceted partnership to a strategic partnership in their bilateral relations. The most important step in this direction was the Joint Declaration on Progress towards a New Stage in Relations between Russia and Turkey and Continued Development of Friendship and Multifaceted Partnership signed by both countries in 2009 during Turkish President Abdullah Gül's visit to Moscow.

But Turkey and Russia found themselves on opposite sides of each other in the Syrian and Libyan crises. And in 2014, Crimea was annexed by Russia; hence the relations between the two countries began to deteriorate rapidly. However it is safe to say that the Russian plane downing in 2015 caused the bilateral relations to deteriorate

completely. Following intense contacts between the two sides, relations entered into a normalization process as of mid-2016, political dialogue was re-established, and various energy projects that were previously frozen began to be implemented gradually.

Despite the developing relations, economic data shows that bilateral trade between the two countries is far below its real potential. For example, the total foreign trade volume between the two countries, which was around 38 billion dollars in 2008, decreased to approximately 26 billion dollars in 2019. Claims that the biggest break of Turkey-Russia economic relations was due to the downing of Russian plane in 2015 seem to be unfounded, given the foreign trade volume, which was 24 billion dollars before the plane crisis, only reached 25 billion dollars by 2020.

However, there is a sharp asymmetry in Turkey-Russia economic and commercial relations. Turkey, which imports natural resources from Russia, exports goods such as textiles and food. Also, the fact that Russia is investing in Turkey's strategic sectors gives it an edge in any political dispute between the two countries.



Therefore, since 2015, Turkey has made various efforts to reduce its dependence on Russia in the energy sector. Since then, it has rapidly increased its liquefied natural gas purchases and reduced natural gas imports from Russia. For example, Turkey's imports of Russian gas in the first half of 2020 have decreased by around 40%. This may lead to a reconsideration of agreements between Russian and Turkish energy companies in the upcoming period. All these events could affect the basis of Turkish-Russian relations. The fact that various geopolitical issues between the two countries over the past few years have prevented cooperation in the energy field should be read in this context. Thus, while common energy projects were at the center of Russian-Turkish relations until 2015, in recent years the two countries have begun to face political and military challenges in regions such as the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, Caucasus and Black Sea regions. As a matter of fact, this change has clearly emerged in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, although it seems to have been settled.

One of the results of the Karabakh war is the likelihood of a new highway between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan, thanks to which Turkey will directly connect with Central Asia. And this greatly worries Russia, for which these regions are important from its security perspective. Indeed, as soon as the topic of the corridor connecting Turkey and Central Asia appeared on the agenda, the Russian public began to discuss the Great Turanian Union, supposedly Turkey's plan. After that Moscow took an important step towards securing its presence in the region.

As a result, a meeting was held between the foreign ministers of Russia and the five states of Central Asia on October 15, 2020, where a declaration was adopted stating that the existing strategic cooperation between these states, especially in the military field, will be further developed. Therefore, the Nagorno-Karabakh War is a much broader geopolitical struggle than a territorial dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia. In this context, it should be seen as a power struggle in the Caucasus and Central

Asia between regional powers such as Turkey and Russia.

Ukraine: A New Crisis in Turkey-Russia Relations

Before the end of the second Nagorno-Karabakh War, signals of a new crisis began to emerge in Turkey-Russia relations. These signals began to come from Ukraine. Russia perceives the steady strengthening of the Turkish-Ukrainian strategic partnership as a threat because it also has important national interests in the Black Sea region. In other words, Russia sees the deepening cooperation between these two countries as NATO's expansion. However, the main reason for including Turkish-Ukrainian cooperation in Moscow's agenda is the Turkish Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV).

Ukraine, having made sure of the success of the Turkish UCAVs, especially after the operations in Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh, has already purchased six UCAVs of the Bayraktar TB2 type. It is stated that it plans to increase this number to 50 in a short time. Ukraine has gone even further and plans to create a joint venture with Turkey to produce UCAVs. Turkey and Ukraine, which are rapidly strengthening their military alliance, signed a Framework Agreement on Military Cooperation on October 16, 2020. And Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Turkey considers Ukraine a key country for ensuring stability, peace and prosperity in the Black Sea region.

However, what matters most is that Ukraine has already signalled that it will use the Turkish-made UCAVs against the Russian-backed separatists in the country's eastern regions. Moscow perceives the deepening military alliance between Ankara and Kiev as a challenge to itself. Because this time, after Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkish UCAs have come very close to the Russian borders. In this context, in recent years, Turkey's success in developing its industry for the production of military unmanned aerial vehicles is already a rebalancing element between Turkey and Russia.

At the beginning of the 18th century, with the acceleration of Russia's expansion towards the south, the biggest conflicts in Turkish-Russian relations emerged over the Caucasus and Black Sea regions. A veiled struggle is still being carried out between the two countries in these regions. However, the two states share their views in some aspects. For example, both Turkey and Russia approach the current world order in the same way. The biggest similarities here are that they do not want to renounce their sovereignty – as in the EU example – and accordingly try to strengthen their state as an independent actor of the world system. It should also be noted that due to this similarity, the bilateral relations of these two states are based on mistrust of each other.

All this from time to time leads to significant constructive cooperation, and sometimes a hard struggle between the two countries. Therefore, within the Turkey-Russia bilateral relations, on one hand, we see such crises as the annexation of Crimea, a downed plane, wars in Syria and Libya; on the other, close cooperation in areas such as energy (Akkuyu NPP and the Turkish Stream pipeline) and military defense (purchase of S-400).

Turkey-US relations are defined by the idea that they are “allies, but cannot be strategic partners.” But Russia-Turkey relations are that of “strategic partners, but they are unlikely to be allies.” When assessing Turkey-Russia relations in an interview, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated that

Turkey-US relations are defined by the idea that they are “allies, but cannot be strategic partners.” But Russia-Turkey relations are that of “strategic partners, but they are unlikely to be allies.”

Russia has never considered Turkey as an ally and that it is only a strategic partner.

This contradictory nature of Turkey-Russia relations actually makes it possible for both sides to keep their relation flexible. As a result of this pragmatism, the relations oscillate between “historical hostility” and “strategic partnership”.

Although the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War seems to have ended thanks to the cooperation of Ankara and Moscow, the risk of breaking the “geopolitical fault lines” between the two states in different regions, especially in the Caucasus and the Black Sea basin, is still high. Russia sees the deepening of the strategic partnership between Turkey and Ukraine over the past two years as a continuation of NATO's eastward expansion.

In this context, it is likely that Russia will start provoking Turkey in other crisis regions. For example, there is already news that Russia is closely cooperating with such terrorist groups as the YPG in northern Syria. And then the fact that after the Nagorno-Karabakh War, Turkey's plan to multiply work to strengthen relations with Central Asian countries quite annoys Russia, which has great interests in this region. On the other hand, the fact that Russia is behaving more and more aggressively towards neighbouring countries in the Caucasus and Black Sea regions (Ukraine and Georgia) is also perceived as a threat by Turkey, which is an important power in the region. As a result, it should be noted that there is a high probability that Turkey and Russia, which managed to establish cooperation in various formats in places such as Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh, will soon face various problems on the Eurasian continent, especially in the Black Sea region.



THE ISTANBUL TALKS AND PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN AFGHANISTAN

HUTHAIFAH BUSUULWA

On 12 March 2021 Turkey announced that it would host high-level talks in April for Afghanistan peace process. The announcement was a confirmation of earlier reports about U.S Secretary of State Anthony Blinken's call for the Taliban and the Afghani government to meet with Turkey as a mediator. This comes at a time when the U.S and NATO partners are racing against time for a final decision regarding troop withdrawal from Afghanistan - slated for May - in line with a deal brokered by the Trump administration with the Taliban in 2020 which committed the withdrawal of foreign forces from the country by May 2021.

It looks like the next outcome will depend on the success of the talks in Istanbul. President Joe Biden has already indicated that the withdrawal decision is still a tough one to make, but the Taliban insist there would be consequences if the withdrawal is not put in effect.

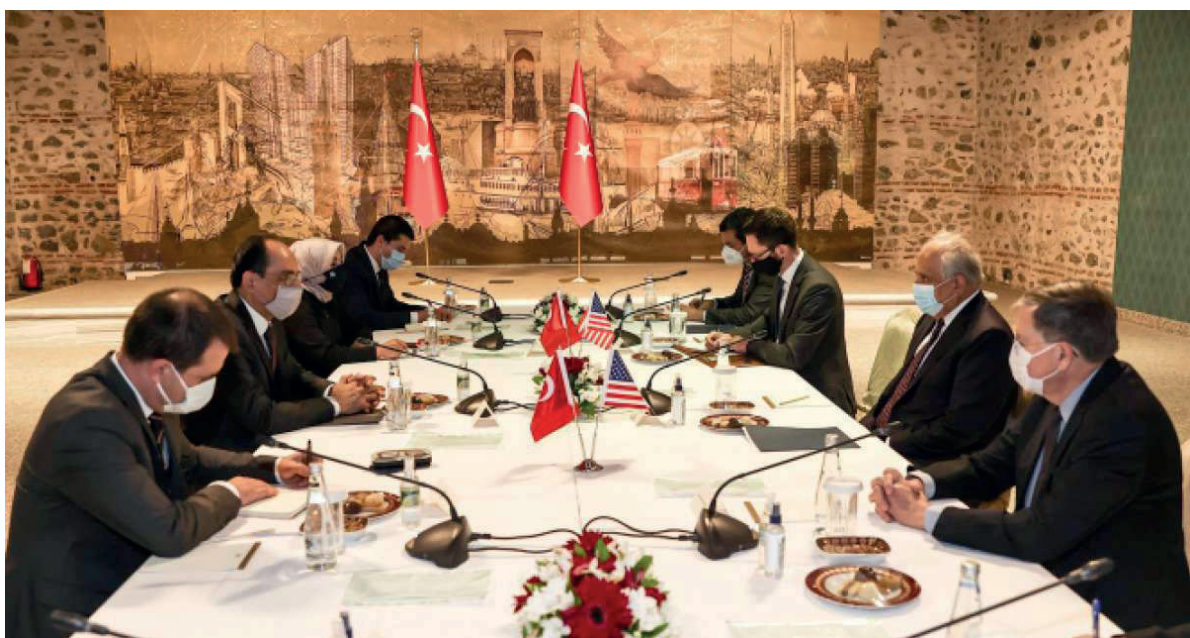
Turkey in this case is perhaps the country best suited to mediate because of its relationship that encompass almost all sections of the Afghan society. The Taliban and the Northern Alliance do trust Turkey, as stated by Kaswar Klasra:

“Turkey is a powerful player in the region. It is perhaps the only country in the world that can ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan. It has a cordial relationship with two major local stakeholders in Afghanistan, including the Northern Alliance and the Taliban. Both of them have shown trust in Ankara in the past as well. It can single-handedly achieve desired peace in war-torn Afghanistan,” . Turkey already has close ties with key actors such as

Rashid Dostum and the Uzbek community in Afghanistan because of their Turkic ethnic links and shared culture. It also has close ties with Abdullah Abdullah, President Ashraf Ghani and other officials. Moreover, it also has close ties with key stakeholders such as Pakistan, Russia, the U.S, NATO, Iran and the Central Asian states.

Turkey has a positive image among the Afghan public because of the long running ties between the two countries. It has contributed enormously to international efforts to rebuild the war-torn country. Turkey has a non-combatant force under NATO which has provided training to the Afghan National Army and police force , and has been involved in the peace process from the beginning through setting direct and indirect communication channels.

However, it is important to note that negotiators will face a difficult job ahead in trying to forge lasting peace. The Afghan government is willing to participate, with



the representation by president Ashraf Ghani, on condition that the Taliban leader Haibatullah Akhunnzada or the son of the late Taliban founder Mullah Yaqub also participate .

Already reports indicate that President Ghani rejected the American proposal for an interim government to accommodate the two warring parties. In its stead President Ghani will present a proposal for presidential elections within six months . U.S Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad's proposal is to replace the government in Kabul with an interim one. But government officials in Kabul told Reuters that "The president would never agree to step aside and any future government should be formed through democratic process, not a political deal."

Already reports indicate that President Ghani rejected the American proposal for an interim government to accommodate the two warring parties.

The major contestation is the disagreement in interests and values of the two major actors in Afghanistan. Kabul for instance insists that Afghanistan should remain a republic with the president and parliament elected. On the other hand, the Taliban are still holding onto their desire for re-establishing a theocratic system with an un-elected leader like it was before they were overthrown in 2001. The Taliban insists the U.S forces to withdraw from the country, before they establish an emirate.

It will be vital to try to resolve those differences of opinion. Covertly the actors are worried about their positions and interests, and before these are rectified there may not be a lasting solution. The Taliban still enjoys some support



from sections of the Afghan people especially the Pashtuns who are wary about the Kabul government. The multi-ethnic country will require considerable management of interests, for instance by espousing symbolic and real representation and prioritizing core values shared by the different facts.

As the Istanbul meeting nears, international actors also seem determined to facilitate a peace deal and curb violence in the war-torn

country. Following a meeting in Moscow, Russia, the U.S, China and Pakistan released a joint statement urging parties in the Afghan war to reach a peace deal. Although it will still be a daunting task, it is hoped that the Istanbul meeting in April may provide the much-needed foundation for peace in Afghanistan, and much needed relief for the people who have been affected by decades of war and turmoil.

End Notes

¹ Eralp Yazar, Daily Sabah, 'Turkey's ties with actors in Afghanistan point to mediator role', published March 21, 2021.

² Menekse Tokyay, Arab News, 'Turkey to host Afghanistan peace meeting' published 12 March 2021

³ Hamid Shalizi Reuters 'Exclusive: Afghan president rejecting U.S peace plan, to offer election in six months, officials say' published March 23, 2021.

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

EPIDEMIC DISEASES IN AFRICA

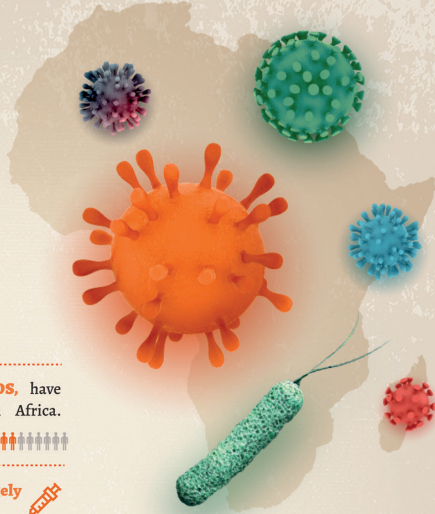
Covid-19 brought back the "epidemic disease" phenomenon to the agenda of all humanity.

However, 1.3 billion people in the African continent have been constantly facing this painful situation for many years.

Numerous infectious diseases, especially AIDS, have claimed the lives of millions of people in Africa.



What hurts more is that these deaths are largely preventable.



MAJOR DEADLY DISEASES IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

HIV (AIDS)

60% of global cases.



MALARIA

92% of global cases.



CHOLERA

80% of global cases.



DIARRHEA

42% of global cases.



SMALLPOX

40% of global cases.



MENINGITIS

Affects more than 400 million people living in the 26 countries of the extended African meningitis belt.



MAIN CAUSES

- Difficulties in accessing clean water
- Shortage of hospitals, healthcare workers and equipment
- Limited treatment options
- Inadequate and unhealthy nutrition

- Poor hygiene
- Pollution caused by drought
- Overpopulation and the increasing spread of diseases in some cities
- Political instability that hinders health measures implementation
- Military occupations and operations done by global actors



POST-SOVIET COUNTRIES: THE GEOGRAPHY OF FAILED REFORMS

ŞAMİL AKOĞLU

With the dissolution of the USSR in the early 1990s, all states that gained their independence went through an intensive reform process, both with the transition from a socialist economy to a free market economy, and with an effort to democratize. However, it is very difficult to say that these reforms have succeeded - except in the Baltic countries – even after 30 years. So what is the root cause of these failed reforms? In other words, why have former Soviet countries not yet fully completed their democratization process?

Before answering this question through some sample countries, it is necessary to mention some common characteristics of the post-Soviet countries in general. When these countries are examined closely, their first problem is that none of them have a large social class that demand democratic reforms or, if any, a representative successful ruling class. Instead, generally more populist representatives stand out. However, after they came to power, instead of implementing reforms, they seek a “middle way”. They know that they need to cooperate with various interest groups in the state administration in order to secure their power. This situation stands as a major obstacle to reforms.

There are several reasons behind the lack of ruling class that would implement reforms in post-Soviet countries. First, these countries could not keep their sovereignty for a long time. In this context, these countries, which were oppressed first by Russian Tsarist and then the Bolsheviks,

could not be independent until the 1990s. A conscious ruling class that knows how to carry out democratic reforms has not emerged in the countries that have gone through such a process.

The second is that these countries, especially Russia, do not have a long tradition of democracy. Democracy is not just about elections; it also requires active political participation. These societies that were ruled by the communist regime until the 1990s did not have such experience. The third concerns Russia, a country positioned right next to these countries and intensely interferes with their internal affairs. Russia's support for the corrupt and anti-reform populist elites in these countries – in order to prevent them from converging with the West – is actually one of the important factors behind the unsuccessful reforms.

Ukraine – where important debates continue on some structural reforms – is one of the best examples to be given here. In 2019, Volodymyr Zelensky came to



power, promising to implement structural reforms that the previous administration failed to achieve. Since the early 2000s, the Ukrainian society, which has changed the country's administration twice with revolution, had high expectations from Zelensky. However, after a year and a half, the new administration has not been able to implement any of the reforms.

Zelensky made three cabinet reshuffles in just 15 months. This is a major obstacle to successful reforms. Because the president's tendency to dismiss his ministers easily caused the ministers to focus more on keeping their seat instead of working for reforms.

As a matter of fact, according to a study carried out in 2020, 42% of Ukrainian citizens believed Zelensky's policies as unsuccessful. Likewise, Zelensky's Servant of the People party lost local elections in

2020 and its rating dropped to just 20%. The people of Ukraine chose this party instead of the European Solidarity party of Petro Poroshenko, who came to power with big promises after the 2014 Maidan Revolution but could not go beyond its populist rhetoric. However, Zelensky's party was also unable to implement structural reforms. The most important factor that caused this is that the Zelensky administration is made up of names with very different "origins". Therefore, the absence of a consolidated reformist power in Ukraine already created major problems for the country.

Judicial and land reforms come first among the structural reforms that failed in Ukraine. It is useful to look at foreign direct investments to measure the success of these reforms. Ukraine had promised to open its doors to foreign investors both during the Orange Revolution in 2004 and during



the Maidan events in 2014. However, by 2020, Ukraine's foreign direct investments decreased 20 times compared to the previous year. Foreign investments, which were 4.5 billion dollars in 2019, declined to 200 million dollars in 2020. This negative development happened because, first of all, the difference between the Poroshenko and Zelensky governments is striking. While tax cuts were made in Poroshenko's term, the Zelensky government argued that this policy was wrong. This is an important factor that negatively affects foreign investments.

The "Promised Land" reform has also failed. While some new regulations are made in the agricultural sector for domestic investors, the sector is still closed to foreign investors. In general, there is a distrust of foreign investors in the society. This is actually the problem in all societies that emerged from a communist order.

In addition, foreign investors check whether there is an independent judiciary in a country that can defend their rights before investing there. Ukraine, meanwhile, entered 2021 with a constitutional crisis that broke out between the president and the constitutional court. The crisis erupted after the anti-corruption law passed by the Zelensky government was found unconstitutional by the constitutional court, giving bureaucrats the right to hide their assets. Zelensky described the constitutional court's decision as a betrayal of the country. This crisis between the president and the constitutional court has triggered the debate on whether there is an independent judiciary in the country, causing foreign investments to leave the country.

The Zelensky government's failure to implement structural reforms is already reflected in the election results. There is a high probability that this process will result in the victory of the new populists in the next elections. However, these populists will

probably be closer to Russia. Because the disintegration that existed in the Ukrainian society for a long time – the western part of the country is closer to the West and the eastern part closer to Russia – had been eliminated before Zelensky. However, this polarization began to be determined again during Zelensky's period.

Moldova sets a good example of the ongoing struggle between reformists and reform opponents. Reformist politician Maia Sandu, who openly argued that Moldova should move away from Russia and develop cooperation with the EU, won the presidential election in November 2020. In Moldova, unlike Ukraine, there is a certain consolidated reformist power. However, Moldova's biggest problem is that the society is segregated for various reasons. Social polarization is most pronounced between pro-Russian socialists and reformists closing in to the West. In addition, the fact that Moldova is the poorest country in Europe is a situation that prevents the country's reformist powers from succeeding. Because in societies where poverty is widespread, democracy is damaged in different ways, such as easy buying of votes. Accordingly, oligarchs can have quite a lot of influence on Moldovan politics.

Sandu, a truly reformist figure in Moldova with such a structure, was elected president. In the current parliament, however, the majority of the Moldovan Socialist Party of former pro-Russian president Igor Dodon is valid. The next parliamentary election will take place in 2023. So, if Sandu fails to force the current parliament into early elections, a major political crisis awaits the country in the next few years.

However, even if Sandu is successful in the early elections, it does not mean that structural reforms can be easily implemented. Because the name that helped Sandu win in the second round was Renato Usatii, who got 17% of the

vote in the first round of the presidential election. Usatii is not an open supporter of Sandu; his opposition to Dodon has led him to cooperate with Sandu. Also it is a known fact that he had close relations with Russian state institutions at the time. Therefore, it should be noted that even if the current parliament were dissolved by early elections, the number of seats of Usatii's party would not be less in the to-be-established parliament. This will be a situation that hinders the structural reforms Sandu aims at.

Another country that needs to be addressed within the scope of post-Soviet countries' reforms is Armenia. Nikol Pashinyan, who came to power during the Velvet Revolution in 2018, initiated the reform process, but the regulations he made until 2021 cannot actually be said as deep structural reforms. Likewise, Pashinyan, who came to power by signalling that Armenia would break its dependence on Russia and develop cooperation with the West, failed in this matter. As a matter of fact, the political crisis Armenia fell into after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War is a clear indicator of this.

The Armenian community sees Pashinyan's reforms failure as the reason behind the country's loss in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. The community then mobilized the old elites, and calls for resignation began to sound for Pashinyan. As a result, at the moment, Pashinyan strives to stay in power instead of reforming what he has achieved.

As soon as Pashinyan came to power, he was able to control the legislative and executive powers left over from the previous administration. Knowing that he would not be able to have full power without revising the judiciary, Pashinyan initiated judicial

reform as the next step. Although he tried to support this with the rhetoric of the need for an independent judiciary, it was known that the basis of this process was to create a judicial power that could work with a new power. In fact, by the end of 2020, the judicial powers, as well as the legislative and executive, were reorganized by the Pashinyan administration.

In addition, it is not possible to say that Armenia is really governed by a parliamentary model. At the basis of a parliamentary system, there must be political parties based on a certain ideology, human and financial resources, and most importantly, certain social groups. It cannot be said that the political parties in Armenia have these. Therefore, Armenia is a suitable example to show that a simple displacement of people in power without deep structural reforms is not enough to produce a

significant result.

Georgia is also a country where the struggle between various interest groups failed in completing important structural reforms that had already started. Mikheil Saakashvili, who came to power with the

The Armenian community sees Pashinyan's reforms failure as the reason behind the country's loss in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. The community then mobilized the old elites, and calls for resignation began to sound for Pashinyan.



Rose Revolution in 2003, was able to implement important reforms until 2012. However, the Georgian Dream Party of Bidzina Ivanishvili, a pro-Russian oligarch, has been in power since 2012. Saakashvili, who could not return to his country since 2013, declared that he would return to Georgia if the opposition wins the parliamentary election in October 2020, but the ruling party continues to hold the majority in the parliament by winning the election. Thereupon, all opposition parties started to boycott the election results. However, although Ivanishvili announced that he left politics in January 2021, it is certain that his influence on the country's politics will continue. In this context, despite the fact that all opposition parties act together, Ivanishvili's large capital also gives him the power to turn all elections in his favor. As a result, Georgia, which has been on the global agenda with its democratic reforms since 2004, is now on the agenda with a political crisis since 2012.

So it is obvious that there are major problems in the implementation of structural reforms in post-Soviet countries. At the root of this lies the problem of seeing the state administration as a tool for various interest groups in these countries to maximize their profits. These interest groups are generally composed of oligarchs that can be defined as interest groups outside the bureaucracy and state apparatus. However, the main actor consists of high-level bureaucracy, which comes from within the state apparatus, and also owes its existence to close relations with political leaders. Therefore, in an environment where there are such powerful players satisfied with the status quo, it becomes impossible to establish a strong reformist group. On the other hand, although such a group emerges, it completely depends on the support of

state administrators. But state administrators do not always support reformists; they act according to the conjuncture. This is why reforms fail in post-Soviet states and sometimes even as anti-reform movements emerge.

In addition, the factor of Western countries is often overlooked when discussing the reforms failure in post-Soviet countries. Western states, which have reached the present state of their democracies through a period of several centuries, want the rest of the world, especially the post-Soviet countries, to show the same success instantly. In addition, while the West uses methods that seem contrary to today's liberal thought to reach democracy, it prevents other countries from following the same path. For example, although almost all developed countries have always implemented protectionist policies in economy to reach this level, today they force other states to switch to the open market immediately. For this, various international institutions are also used as a printing tool.

Another important point is that the US and EU countries do not fully support post-Soviet countries' effort to get closer to the Western world. This was clearly seen in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014. When these two states, which tried to develop cooperation with the West by moving away from Russia, were attacked by Russia, the US and EU countries did not take any other action other than imposing sanctions against Russia. This policy causes distrust in post-Soviet states. As a result, post-Soviet states prefer to get along with their neighbour Russia, rather than cooperating with the Western states that have no clear policy. All these factors prevent successful structural reforms in post-Soviet countries.

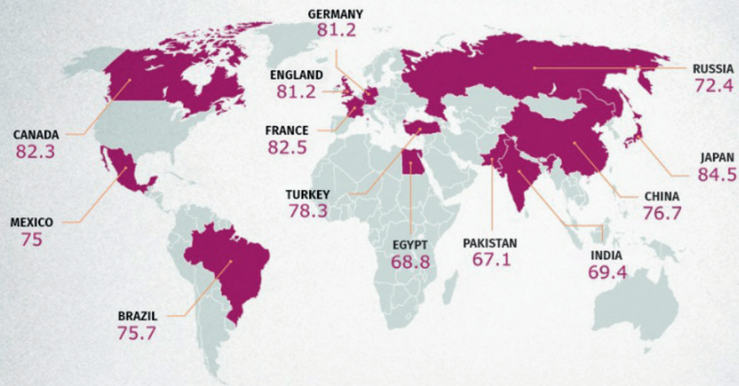
INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY DATA

The average life expectancy in Africa is considerably lower than the rest of the world due to famines, epidemics, civil wars and conflicts. The data also reveal that global population is **getting older**, especially in EU countries.

AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY IN SOME COUNTRIES



THE GLOBAL AVERAGE
LIFE EXPECTANCY IS
72.6 YEARS



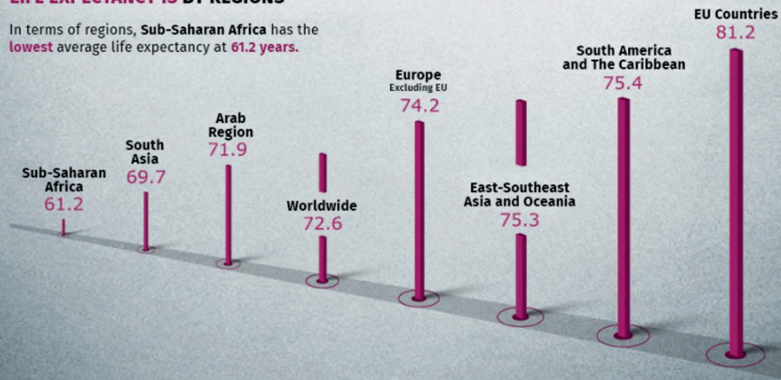
AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY
FOR WOMEN
74.9 YEARS



AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY
FOR MEN
70.4 YEARS

LIFE EXPECTANCY IS BY REGIONS

In terms of regions, Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest average life expectancy at **61.2 years**.



© 2021
CONTENT: HOSEYİN TÜRKAN
DESIGN BY: SELİN VATANCI
SOURCE: UNDP HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT, 2019



INSAMER
İSİTİM VE İKTİSADİ ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER
مركز البحوث الاقتصادية والاجتماعية

DEMOCRACY AND THE MUSLIM QUESTION IN MYANMAR

ABDUL WAHEED PARRY

Myanmar is on the news again. This time it is not for the Rohingya Muslims, who have been escaping ethnic cleansing in recent years. This time the civil leadership, which was hand in glove with the Myanmar army in persecuting Muslims, has been put in jail. The Myanmar army has declared a one-year state-of-emergency on 1 February. It seized the power and put Aung San Suu Kyi of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party under house arrest. The same fate also happened to other NLD leaders.

The 'New' in Myanmar:

The coup followed a general election in which the NDL party won by a landslide. The country's opposition claimed a widespread election fraud and demanded a rerun. The military forces backed the opposition in their claims, though Myanmar's electoral commission said that there was no evidence to prove these claims. The coup was staged at a time when a new session of parliament was set to start. The military replaced the already ailing democratic government by arresting civilian leaders, shutting off the internet and cutting off flights. It also took control of the parliament and other state institutions. Suu Kyi, the major figure of civilian leadership, was charged of violating an obscure import law. The coup has returned the country to a point following a short span of a civil rule in 2011 – when the military, which had been in power since 1962, implemented elections and other reforms.

The power was handed over to coup leader Army chief Min Aung Hlaing, the leader of the coup. He has been successfully maintaining the power of Myanmar's army, and has long been enjoying political influence because of the country's weak democracy.

The truth is that the military never really lost control. Despite the ostensible democratic reforms in recent years, the Tatmadaw—as Myanmar's armed forces are officially known—retained powerful influence, including control of the defense, border affairs and home affairs ministries. The country's 2008 constitution guarantees the military 25% of seats in parliament and veto power over any constitutional amendment. (Time, 2021)

The Muslim Question in Myanmar:

Rohingya Muslim minority has been suffering for a long time. They have been facing persecution for years, and the so-

called democratic regime led by Suu Kyi proved no exception. The Myanmar army launched a crackdown in 2017 on Rohingya Muslims. They are considered as illegal immigrants and are denied citizenship in Myanmar. Over decades, hundreds and thousands of Rohingya Muslims have fled the country to escape persecution. Thousands of them killed, and millions fled to neighbouring Bangladesh. Rights activists since 2017 have been vocal about the atrocities unleashed by the Myanmar army against the Rohingya Muslims, who live in the west of the country. Death, threat and abuse are the new norm for the Muslim population of Myanmar.

Part of why it happens is that the majority of the country belongs to the Bamar ethnicity, which observe Buddhism and dominate the elite governing class. Other ethnic minorities, especially the Rohingya Muslims, face persecution at the hands of the military. The UN investigators have

reported that the Myanmar armed forces have waged war against the Rohingyas with clear intentions of genocide. A report of the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar says that,

“The Mission established consistent patterns of serious human rights violations and abuses in Kachin, Rakhine and Shan States, in addition to serious violations of international humanitarian law. These are principally committed by the Myanmar security forces, particularly the military. Their operations are based on policies, tactics and conduct that consistently fail to respect international law, including by deliberately targeting civilians. Many violations amount to the gravest crimes under international law.” (HRC, 2018)

The Suu Kyi administration had been denying its persecution of the Rohingya Muslims. Suu Kyi appeared before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2019



and denied the allegations that the army had committed genocide on the Rohingya Muslims. Many international human rights forums have blamed Suu Kyi for failing to exercise her “moral authority.” The UN report notes about her administration,

“Through their acts and omissions, the civilian authorities have contributed to the commission of atrocity crimes.” (HRC, 2018)

The Rohingya Muslims neither found support from the civilian government nor the general public of the country. The civilian government not only defended the military in the ICJ hearing in 2019, it also filed objections to the ICJ over the genocide case the Myanmar military officials are facing, two weeks before the coup.

The Military Coup and the Future of Rohingyas:

The Myanmar people may have started to realize that the country’s military is the common enemy of the people. Many of them shared on social media that they have realized the fact that the military was involved in grave human rights violations against the Rohingyas. Similarly, the Rohingyas, who have stood up to support the people of Myanmar, hope that this solidarity with their countrymen will help end discrimination against them.

The coup at one hand has given a hope that international pressure may mount on military leadership and the regime will be isolated further. After the coup, the Myanmar

The Myanmar people may have started to realize that the country’s military is the common enemy of the people.

people are calling to lobby the International Criminal Court (ICC) to persecute General Aung Hlaing for atrocities committed against the Rohingya Muslims. On the other hand, the Rohingya people fear the surge in atrocities by the army.

It’s not good news. The thrust of the pushback on the atrocities in Rakhine state came from strong international pressure, which is now squarely focused on the coup. It is unclear what might occur now that the military, which is alleged to have been responsible for genocide there, may do next. It is further worth noting that mobile and internet communications in Rakhine

state have been heavily restricted amid accusations from rights groups that the atrocities are ongoing. (Bloomberg, 2021)

The recent coup has killed the hope of Rohingya refugees from returning to their homeland in the near future. Activists all over the world fear that the military could take the matter into their own hands again and continue to kill and persecute the Rohingyas. People in the Rakhine state fear that the military has now gained full control of the government. They are terrified that the military’s power grab would only increase violent attacks against them. The military, being directly in charge, certainly raises the risks of violence and human rights violations in the future. International human rights forums have already alarmed about Myanmar’s military power abuse.

“Military necessity would never justify killing indiscriminately, gang raping women, assaulting children, and burning entire villages. The Tatmadaw’s tactics are

consistently and grossly disproportionate to actual security threats.”(HRC, 2018)

Many experts believe that the coup – among others – would impose long-term

damages on Myanmar’s Rohingya Muslims. They fear a heightened ethnic tensions in the country, which could be used as an excuse by the military to extend the state of emergency.

Sources

- ¹ Human Rights Council’s Report of the detailed findings of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar-2018. https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/FFM-Myanmar/A_HRC_39_CRP.2.pdf
- ² The New York Times. (2021, Feb 10). Myanmar’s Coup, Explained. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/article/2021-myanmar-coup.html>
- ³ Time. (2021, Feb 03). Can Myanmar’s Democracy Survive without Aung San Suu Kyi. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5935540/aung-san-suu-kyi-myanmar-democracy/>
- ⁴ Bloomberg. (2021, Feb 02). Burning Questions about the Myanmar Coup. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-02/12-burning-questions-on-the-myanmar-military-coup-suu-kyi-global-impact>



GEOPOLITICAL BALANCE IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

MOKHMAD AKHIYADOV

With the end of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, the continuous geopolitical struggle in the Caucasus started to flare up even more. The moves of non-regional actors such as NATO, the EU and regional powers such as Turkey, Russia and Iran have the potential to change the region's geopolitical equation in the medium term. This shows that the struggle has evolved into a new stage. The most important distinguishing feature of this stage is that various alliances have begun to be determined between the extra-regional powers and the regional states Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. However, since these alliances have not taken their final form, they are ready to change any time.

With the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War that broke out at the end of 2020, two important developments took place in terms of geopolitical balances in the region. The first one is the new initiative proposed by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev after the war, known as the Caucasus Platform or 3+3 Format. It is expected that the platform set up with participation of Turkey, Russia and Iran as well as the three South Caucasus states will establish peace in the region. The second important development that emerged after the war is that the West, which has been criticized for staying passive in terms of geopolitical struggle in the Caucasus in recent years, especially the USA, has started to pursue more active politics in the region, especially in Georgia, through mechanisms such as NATO and the EU. As a result of these two developments, the alliances that tried to be formed by various powers in the Caucasus began to become more evident. However, there are many factors among

the internal political dynamics of Georgia and Armenia that prevent the successful conclusion of both alliances, which seem to oppose each other.

During his visit to Baku in November 2020 Erdogan stated that the Caucasus Platform, with the participation of Turkey, Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia, will ensure sustainable peace and stability in the region and that all parties will gain economic benefits. At the same time, Erdogan stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin also views this project positively. Less than a month later, Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili's statement that Georgia has assumed the role of peace in the Caucasus for centuries and that the Georgian side should not remain passive to the Caucasus Platform initiative was met with great reaction from the opposition. Opposition parties accused Zurbishvili of endangering the country's national security interests, stating that a platform where Russia could participate would not be acceptable by Georgia.

It seems impossible for Georgia to participate in this platform since it sees Russia as the state occupying approximately 20% of its territory. Despite the efforts of the ruling Georgian Dream Party to normalize relations with Russia, its foreign policy approach to Moscow would mean political suicide. Because after the 2008 Georgia-Russia War, Georgia's foreign policy and all of its internal political debates have been carried out in one way or another based on Russia's occupying policies. Therefore, none of Georgian political forces will dare to take such a step, knowing that a positive approach to a project in which one of the leaders is Moscow will lead to accusation of treason to the country.

Also recently, it has been noticeable that there is an unspoken agreement between Turkey, Russia and Iran that only regional powers should solve problems in the region. In other words, efforts are being made to prevent non-regional actors such as the EU and the USA from being included in the process. As a matter of fact, the Caucasus Platform initiative should be handled as a result of this thought. This poses great geopolitical risks for Georgia. Because, joining the platform, which includes two geopolitical rivals of the USA such as Russia and Iran, will cause Washington to reverse its friendly attitude in terms of considering Tbilisi as a strategic partner.



Another important issue that should be handled within the scope of the Caucasus Platform is how Armenia approaches this initiative. Above all, one of the parties that will gain the greatest economic profit from taking part in this platform is Armenia. The closure of the borders of Armenia in the west with Turkey and in the east with Azerbaijan since the 1990s has a very negative effect on the country's economy. Two other countries with common borders are Georgia and Iran. Therefore, Armenia's only gateway to the world is Georgia. However, this is not a very safe route, because the lingering conflicts between Russia and Georgia may cause this road to be closed at any moment. As a matter of fact, the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008 has clearly demonstrated this. Therefore, Armenia should urgently open its borders with Turkey and Azerbaijan to achieve economic prosperity.

As a result of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, when a large part of Azerbaijani territories were taken back, Ankara and Baku gave the green light to the solution of their border problem. However, it seems difficult for Yerevan to respond this positively for now. Although Yerevan knows that it will gain the most from this move, the political balances that emerged in the country in the 1990s – and are still valid today – remain a major obstacle to the opening of these borders. Since the political forces in Yerevan know that the one who takes the first step in establishing relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey, which are considered the biggest enemies in the

Armenian society, will shoot themselves in the foot. Therefore, they will try to avoid it. This becomes even more difficult, especially considering the results of the Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020. Therefore, while the Moscow-Tbilisi dispute prevents Georgia from joining the Caucasus Platform, the Yerevan-Baku and Yerevan-Ankara disputes interrupt Armenia's participation.

Another important point for the Caucasian Platform initiative is Russia's position.

Although Erdogan has expressed that Putin has a positive view of this, there has not been a reasonable statement from Moscow on this issue. In this context, it should be noted that Russia's participation in such a platform would actually mean that it is ready to share its influence in the Caucasus with other regional powers such as Turkey and Iran. Thus, Russia does not welcome the increase in Turkey and Iran's influence in the region through initiatives such as the Caucasus Platform.

On the other hand, Russia, realizing that Turkey has many disagreements with the West in recent years, may try to use the Caucasus platform as a suitable tool for further isolating Turkey. Because Turkey's acts together with Russia and Iran, which are geopolitical rivals of the United States, will lead to further exacerbations in

relations between Washington and Ankara. Considering that this platform is particularly suitable for Iran to bypass sanctions, Washington's possible reaction will be understood more easily.

As a result of the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, when a large part of Azerbaijani territories were taken back, Ankara and Baku gave the green light to the solution of their border problem.

As a matter of fact, it is seen that the West took action in the South Caucasus as soon as the Caucasus Platform came to the agenda. However, this is limited to Georgia for now. Following the telephone conversation between Georgia and the US Defence Minister in March 2021, the Pentagon press service declared, “the USA respects Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and will do its best to strengthen the country’s defence against Russia’s aggression.” On the same date, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said, “NATO’s doors are open to Georgia. However, it needs to implement reforms to modernize institutions and fight corruption, regardless of whether it will become a member soon or in the distant future.” However, the concept of “a distant future” in NATO’s statement has always shaken and continues to shake Georgia’s trust in the West. In fact, the positive statements of the Georgian President Zurabishvili towards the Caucasus Platform can be evaluated within this framework. However, this does not mean that Georgia is moving away from the West.

Another important development is the intense contact between the EU and

Georgia, which has recently increased. Since November 2020, there has been a political crisis between the main opposition party, the United National Movement – which does not accept the results of the parliamentary election – and the ruling Georgian Dream Party. By March 2021, the EU acted and sent its Special Representative of the President of the European Council to Georgia to bring both parties to the negotiating table. However, statements of the parties indicated that the solution is not close while negotiations are continuing.

As a result, NATO and the EU are in no hurry to accept Georgia as a member. And this undermines Tbilisi’s confidence in the West. Although high-level contacts between the two sides have intensified recently, it is difficult to say that there have been important changes in Western policy towards Georgia. Still, it cannot be said that the Caucasus Platform, initiated by Ankara and Baku and excluding the West from the region, will be successful, at least at this stage. Especially the political reality in Armenia and Georgia is one of the factors hindering the implementation of the initiative.



DÉBY: THE LAST VICTIM OF LIBYA CRISIS

DR. SERHAT ORAKÇI

Chad President Idriss Déby died a short time ago and left behind one of the poorest nations of the world. Déby's legacy in Chad is not very bright unfortunately. He left his nation with widespread poverty, underdevelopment and undemocratic state system. Despite being an oil and cotton producing country, Chad is usually ranked with high poverty rate. According to the World Bank (WB) data half of Chad's population live under poverty.

For a long time, Chad army under the command of Idriss Déby had been playing critical roles for France's military operations in the field, which used to be known as Francophone Africa. Moreover, Chad has been hosting a French military base. The sudden death of Sahel's strongman confused France, since Déby was one of France's strongest allies on the Sahel region. French Defense Minister Florence Parly explained that France lost "an essential ally in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel".

French President Emmanuel Macron visited N'Djamena for Déby's funeral and met Déby's son Mahamat Idriss Déby, known as Mahamat Kaka, who now becomes the de facto new leader of Chad, chairing the Transitional Military Council (TCM). While Chad's parliament and constitution were dissolved by TCM, the council would be in charge for 18 months until the next election. However, there are indications that the transition would not be as smooth as presented. Opposition groups and armed rebels reject this decision. French magazine

Le Monde described the transition process in Chad as carrying high risks.

Chad was a punishment post for French officials during the colonial era, but nowadays, it seems that Chad's strategic value for France has become more important, especially during the Déby era. From Mali to Sudan and from Libya to Central Africa, Chad's location occupies a very central point in an area in which new powers like China, Russia and Turkey have initiated their appearance recently. This new atmosphere in the Sahel brings the idea that there might be some connection between Déby's sudden death and big powers rivalry. France has to compete with new powers in Francophone Africa. In Libya, for instance, Russia and France support Khalifa Haftar's LNA (Libyan National Arab Army) while in the Central African Republic (CAR) Russia and France follow a different agenda.

There are some facts that remained unexplained until today. First, why would a president, in the aftermath of his election victory, visit a conflict zone threatened



by FACT (Front pour l'alternance et la concorde au Tchad) rebels? Second, how could a splinter group FACT with only 1500 combatants become very strong and influential in Chad after 2016? According to open sources, FACT is a rebel group operating in Libya in collaboration with Khalifa Haftar to fight against ISIS. The same FACT is also combatting against Idriss Déby who was France's strong ally in counter-terrorism operations in the Sahel. Haftar has been a close ally to France and Russia at the same time. It seems that even Chad and Libya experts couldn't explain this strange formula. On top of that, there are more oddness. According to

France was never really interested in Chad's development, poverty reduction or democratization.

Liberation's article, FACT leader Mahamat Mahadi Ali has socialist connections in France and once held a refugee status there.

Idriss Déby's relation with France had become more strategic in the last decade. Chadian troops function in Mali, CAR and the Chad Lake region as the protector of France's regional interests. It was clear that Déby and his military circles had been shielding France. This is because whenever there was a French military operation,

Idriss Déby was also there. Even his son Mahamat Kaka who was trained in France was in command for the Chadian Intervention in Northern Mali (FATIM). Frankly, what made Déby more strategic



for France was the military ambition of latter. France was never really interested in Chad's development, poverty reduction or democratization. French leaders have blindly supported a ruler although Chad's human rights record has been too weak and Déby had ruled Chad with iron fist for three decades.

The Libyan crisis continues to create new victims. It is a commonly accepted fact that the current turbulence in Mali's north provinces started following Qaddafi's death

in Libya. It is widely believed that money and weaponry spilled over the Sahel and ethnic and religious armed groups once allied with Qaddafi have become more effective in their territorial control. Al-Qaida, ISIS and some other ethnic armed rebel groups have all used Libya's instability for their own sake. Armed groups such as FACT have been using Libya to generate more power for their personal benefit. Increasing the number of arms in Libya has definitely created unsafe atmosphere for Sahelian countries and Idriss Déby was the last victim of the Libya crisis.

End Notes

¹ "The World Bank in Chad", WB, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/chad/overview>

² "France says Chad's Deby was 'essential' ally in fight against terrorism", RFI, 20.04.2021, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20210420-france-says-chad-s-deby-was-essential-ally-in-fight-against-terrorism>

³ "Tchad: une transition à hauts risques", Le Monde,

22.04.2021, https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2021/04/21/tchad-une-transition-a-hauts-risques_6077529_3232.html

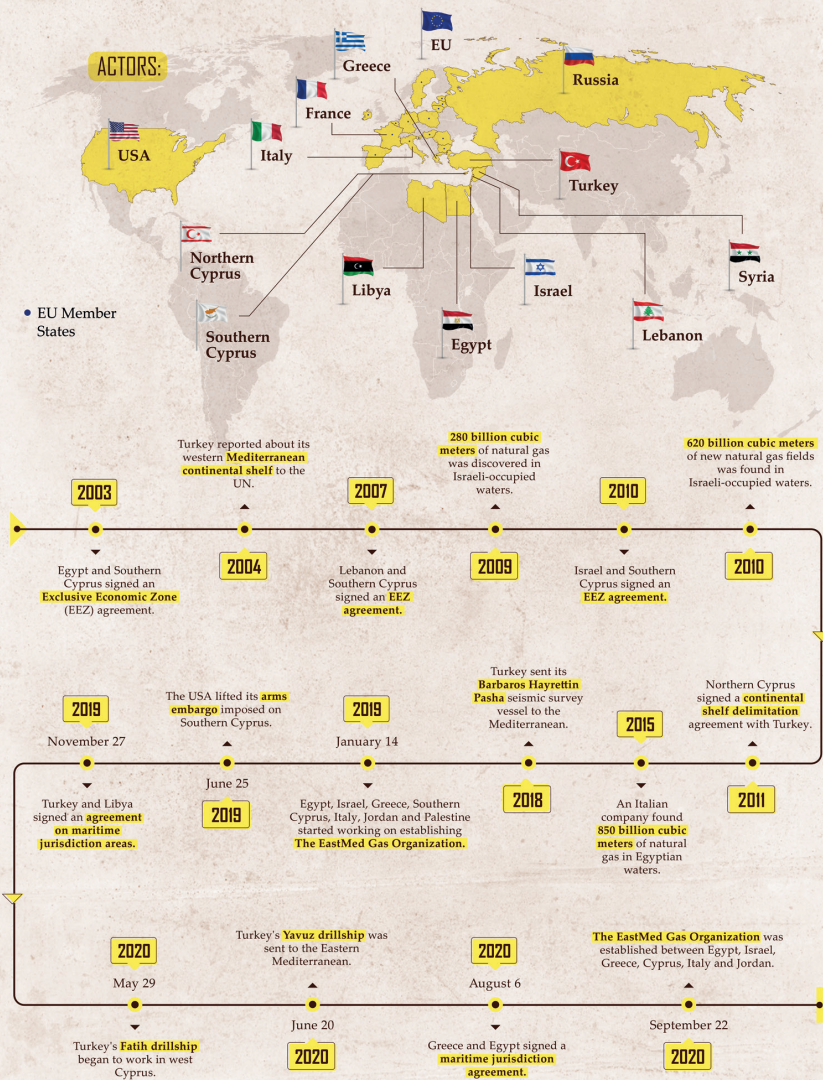
⁴ Célian Macé, "Portrait: Mahamat Mahadi Ali, la rose et la glaive", Liberation, 29.05.2017, https://www.liberation.fr/planete/2017/05/29/mahamat-mahadi-ali-la-rose-et-le-glaive_1573102/

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

MILESTONES OF CONFLICT IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Events that occurred in the last 17 years imply major historical transformations due to new energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the rising geopolitical competition in the region including the scenario of Turkey's exclusion.



WHAT SHAPES TURKEY'S THRIVING INFLUENCE IN AFRICA?

RABIUL ISLAM

Turkey has an advantage and abundant potentials in terms of its relations with the African continent because the country is free of colonial history and exploitation on the continent. Since it was granted the observer status at the African Union (AU) in 2005 - known as "the year of Africa" - Turkey has gained a new status as a new emerging economic and humanitarian power in Africa. Its model of combining diplomacy with a strong commitment that focuses on direct aid and mutually beneficial economic partnerships have been instrumental in winning local support and manifested real impact on the ground. Its trade volume with Africa increased from around \$5.4 billion in 2003 to around \$26 billion in 2019, with \$16 billion exports to Africa, according to TurkStat.

Energy

Turkey is an energy-importing country although it was excluded in important agreements that shape the shares of the East Mediterranean countries - which lead to tension in the region. It all started when the Greek Cypriot administration made international agreements disregarding the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) rights to work on extraction of the natural resources around the island.

According to US Geological Survey, the eastern Mediterranean contains natural gas worth approximately \$700 billion. Egypt, Greece, the Greek Cypriot administration, Italy, and Israel established the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) as an intergovernmental organization giving formal status to a group that seeks to promote natural gas exports from the eastern Mediterranean and tried to leave out Libya, Lebanon and Turkey.

EMGF unites Turkey's regional rivals, which have been locked in a bitter dispute over gas drilling rights in the region. France, a vocal opponent of Turkey's aims in the region, has also applied for membership. However, Turkey and Libya reached an agreement on the delimitation of the maritime jurisdiction areas in the Mediterranean Sea, which came as a game changer for the EMGF plans. Cyprus, Greece, and Israel were working to develop a pipeline at an estimated \$7-9 billion to transport the eastern Mediterranean gas into Europe. The pipeline would have to cross the Turkey-Libya jurisdiction. The agreement signed with Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA) provided a column for Turkey's Eastern Mediterranean policy.

Hence Turkey has more prominent and powerful role in Libya, although we cannot yet say that it has become a dominant player in Africa. This is because historically there are many international players in Africa including the US, France and China.



Business

Another motivation for Turkey to go to GNA was to prevent Libya from falling under the sway of Egypt and the UAE, which would affect Ankara's geostrategic and economic interests, not only in Libya itself, but also in the East Mediterranean. For decades, Turkish businesses have been involved in Libya, particularly in the construction sector. Before Ghadafi's fall, about a hundred Turkish construction companies had reportedly signed contracts in Libya. However, due to the Arab Spring, they had to abandon their projects there. The total value of Turkish firms' unfinished projects amounts to \$19 billion, while uncollected accrued receivables stand at \$1 billion, collateral amount at \$1.7 billion and other losses at about \$1.3 billion.

Libya is the third-largest market for Turkey's construction sector, according to the Turkish

Contractors Union (TMB). Libya was also the first overseas market for Turkish contractors STFA, entered in 1972 to build the Tripoli Harbor. Therefore, Libya can preserve Turkey's political and economic dominance in the region, partly for understanding Turkey's extended support to GNA.

Turkey's involvement in Libya was strongly condemned by Egypt, the UAE, Greece, Cyprus and France. Critics however failed to explain why countries like the US, Russia, France and Italy were in Libya, but rather picked on Turkey.

Humanitarian

Turkey's growing influence in Africa is not only aided by projects and policies implemented by the Turkish government through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), but also shaped by personal contributions made by the Turkish people



through various humanitarian organizations.

In Uganda, various Turkish organizations including the Foundation for Education and Solidarity (FES), Turkey-Uganda (TURUGA), The Association of Friends of All Africa (TAAD) and the Care Foundation among others are helping people to overcome poverty and helplessness brought about by unemployment and economic inequalities, focusing on education, health, sanitation and infrastructure development.

Water has been a major focus this year, after Turkish volunteers found about some poor Ugandan Muslims who converted to Christianity for the sake of water. In the area, there was only one mosque with no water source, compared to six churches which all had water sources. At the mosque, a water harvesting option during the rainy season had been made, but during the dry season, they have no water, and that is when they have to resort to the churches. It is here that some Muslims are offered to access free water if they convert to Christianity.

In terms of education, school-aged children often bear the burden of walking miles each

The relations between Africa and Turkey have been based on partnership and mutual cooperation. Relations with Africa have also elevated Turkey's global policy as one major international actor.

day to find water in streams and ponds – full of water-borne diseases that are making them and their families sick. Illness and the time lost fetching it robs children of their school time. When children are freed from gathering water, they can return to school. Without water, they can't stay at school; without water, they can't stay healthy.

Fortunately, Turkish volunteers have built several boreholes in different areas for people of all faiths to access free clean water.

The relations between Africa and Turkey have been based on partnership and mutual cooperation. Relations with Africa have also elevated Turkey's global policy as one major international actor. This arises out of the high number of representations of African countries in regional and international institutions.

With COVID-19, it is possible to see a reduction of Turkey's humanitarian and development activities in Africa; a lot of this will depend on the resilience of Turkey's economy, which will give a sense of direction to its foreign policy.

Sources

Mfonobong Nsehe, Why Turkey's Economy Is Rising And What It Means For Trading Partners In Africa: An Interview With Nihat Zeybekci, [Jun 15, 2018], web site:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/mfonobongnsehe/2018/06/15/why-turkeys-economy-is-rising-and-what-it-means-for-trading-partners-in-africa-nihat-zeybekci/?sh=32e99bdc4130>

Republic of Turkey Ministry of Trade, Turkey-Africa Trade and Economic Relations, web site: <https://www.trade.gov.tr/multinational-relations/turkey-africa-economic-and-business-forum/turkey-africa-relations>

African Union, Africa-Turkey Partnership, web site: https://au.int/en/partnerships/africa_turkey

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

FACTS ON SUICIDE!

Around **800,000** people worldwide commit suicide annually.

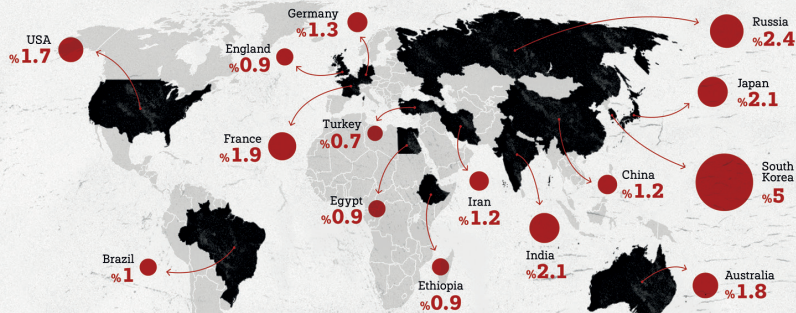
This number is **twice that of deaths** due to murder.

It is estimated that those who **attempted suicide** are **20 TIMES** more than those who died due to suicide.

In some countries, this rate reaches **5%**

Suicide is responsible for approximately **1.5%** of deaths in the world.

SUICIDE RATES OF TOTAL DEATH IN FOLLOWING COUNTRIES



MALES AND THE ELDERLY TEND TO HAVE HIGHER SUICIDE RATES



15-49 AGE RANGE

Suicide Rate:
11.6 per 100,000



50-69 AGE RANGE

Suicide Rate:
16.1 per 100,000



70 AND OLDER GROUP

Suicide Rate:
27.4 per 100,000



MALES

Suicide Rate:
13.9 per 100,000



KADINLAR

Suicide Rate:
6.3 per 100,000

This proportional difference between men and women is much higher in some countries.

© 2021



INSAMER
İHH İNSAN VE SOSYAL ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
IHH HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER
مركز البحوث الإنسانية والاجتماعية

TURKISH NGOs IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

EMRE YILDIRIM

Relations with Africa constitute one of the prime orientations of Turkish foreign policy. Although Turkey-Africa relations have gone as far as the Ottoman time, Turkey's interest to develop relations with Africa is relatively new. Geographically, Turkey has always regarded North Africa as part of its "near-abroad", and the Ottoman legacy has played an instrumental role in this regard.

Sub-Saharan Africa, on the other hand, has always been regarded by the Turkish society as a distant and unknown region. Turkey's current enhanced presence in sub-Saharan Africa, therefore, is something novel. Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of some sub-Saharan African countries following their freedom from British and French rule in the 1950s and 1960s. But after this first warm welcoming, the relations did not develop as it should be due to unsuitable conditions of the Cold War.

The relations actually began in 1998 with the writing of the "Action Plan"- a document prepared by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the framework of political and economic engagements between Turkey and the continent. Turkey named 2005 as the "Year of Africa", enabling the creation of a new impetus for the bilateral relations. The Turkey-Africa Summit in 2008 in Istanbul ushered a new era and enhanced the relations. Turkey's further boost to its Africa policy as of 2013 turned the relations into a mutually reinforced political-economic partnership.

Turkish diplomatic involvement, coupled with educational outreach, humanitarian activities and private-sector investments, has successfully given it a deep footprint on the continent in general, and in Southern Africa in particular. Unlike other emerging economies like China and India, Turkey's objectives on the continent are not limited to business alone - providing a more sustainable future in the region - since it enables both a grassroots social presence and continuous political engagement.

One of the most important examples of the Turkish cooperative engagement is its scholarship to African students. Until recently, undergraduate and graduate scholarships to students from all African states have been offered by government agencies. More than 5.000 students from sub-Saharan Africa have been enrolled in Turkish universities between 2000 and 2012. Today the number is more than 10.000.

Besides public institutions, Turkish NGOs also play positive roles in sub-Saharan African educational projects. For example since 2007, IHH has introduced a foreign student program for African students.

Turkish universities, NGOs, and public bodies have been working separately yet in harmony to provide educational opportunities for sub-Saharan African students. Public institutions as well as about 13 NGOs work in more than 30 sub-Saharan African countries. Activities are arranged in different areas of specific development programs such as agriculture, health, professional training, education etc.

Turkey has also joined six other countries at the African Union as an observer, become a non-regional member of the African Development Bank, increased its trade and Foreign Direct Investment at more than \$6 billion and increased humanitarian development assistances through public and private organizations.

Developing and intensifying ties with African countries is likely to continue in Turkey's future as it is widely supported by its NGOs. One third of \$4,3 billion Turkish foreign development assistance (\$1,5 billion) went to African countries. About 50% of Turkey's public development funding was also spent on projects in sub-Saharan Africa. And out of Turkey's NGOs' \$1 billion direct foreign assistance, 31% of it (\$300 million) has been distributed in Africa.

NGOs Role in the Relations

Turkish NGO's humanitarian relief activities in Africa play a critical role in enhancing Turkey's soft power at the international level. Turkish NGOs budget

Turkish NGOs humanitarian relief assistance has strengthened their role in the African continent. The African people have provided their support to these NGOs due to their indiscriminate assistances.

for Africa is about \$500 million, one third of which goes to southern Africa. Half of the donation goes to humanitarian assistances, a quarter for development and the rest for logistical purposes, making Turkey one of the largest international development donors to the continent.

Previously there was a concern that collaboration between the government and NGOs from different identities would damage the Kemalist ideology, but the ruling party managed to brush away such fear. Since 2002, Turkey has strengthened its relations with different local NGOs regardless of their identities and values, all the while encouraging them to take more responsibilities in regions hit by poverty, diseases, war, conflict and natural disasters.

Turkish NGOs humanitarian relief assistance has strengthened their role in the African continent. The African people have provided their support to these NGOs due to their indiscriminate assistances. Furthermore, these NGOs have developed a complementary policy, which aims to make comprehensive projects to reduce humanitarian problems. The focus of Turkish NGOs in Africa range from managing education problems up to their healthcare, agriculture, human rights and liberties. Developing a comprehensive humanitarian aid policy has given Turkish NGOs stronger, transparent, humanitarian and more effective role in global politics compared to Western aid agencies.



Before public agencies began its operations in sub-Saharan Africa, NGOs activities were ad hoc, single country emergency aid campaigns in the form of supplying food, clothing and medicine, mostly at times of crisis or religious holidays. Such campaigns have also evolved into more sustainable development assistance in the form of construction and infrastructure projects. For example, since 2005, IHH has taken part in many projects in Africa, including building schools, providing medical check-ups, and drilling water wells. Initial cooperation with local NGOs enabled them to gain the know-how, new networking opportunities, and helped them accelerate and extend their activities.

Turkish NGOs have emerged to promote intercultural exchange and humanitarian projects. For example, in 2010 IHH carried about 60 different projects with budget at about €2,5 million. In five years, the number of projects increased to 130 and the budget to €5,5 million. The figures show that IHH's engagement with African countries alone doubled in five years.

Turkish NGOs role in southern Africa can be categorized into development, humanitarian and social/community. Developmental role provides additional opportunities for the civil society and beneficiaries regarding full independence. Turkish NGOs carry out different kinds of development projects such as school construction, capacity building training programs,

distribution of livestock, up to establishing radio stations for educational purposes.

Humanitarian role includes all kind of assistance programs from emergency relief to long-term assistances such as building orphanages, disaster assistance, and medical assistance, among others. Social or community role helps build trust between the African people and the Turkish society. In this regard aids such as food assistances and cataract operations are instrumental. It is true that these kinds of projects are humanitarian in its essence, but in the long run these humanitarian activities helps a country's future as a whole.

Turkish NGOs have emerged to promote intercultural exchange and humanitarian projects. For example, in 2010 IHH carried about 60 different projects with budget at about €2,5 million.

The Consequences of the Arab Spring on Africa

Unfortunately, irrelevant developments in different parts of the world have disturbed Turkish-African NGO relations. The Arab Spring and the Syrian War in particular have generated a refugee crisis for Turkey. Turkey currently hosts about 3 million Syrian refugees, making it the top refugee host in the world. Consequently, the government has to mobilize all its public agencies and NGOs to channel their resources to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

Thus, since 2012, over 55% of Turkish developmental aid has gone to the Syrian crisis while the figures for Sub-Saharan Africa continue to fall. The Turkish



government's scholarships to Sub-Saharan countries have also declined parallel with the worsening of the Syrian crisis. Preference and focus of attention is now given to Syria and Palestine, with thousands of students coming every year to study in Turkey.

Another problem is the fact that in previous years the funds from different Islamic countries came at a price. As was mentioned in the first summit, "the price is that the unity in African societies have seen a kind of religious divide widened between organizations supported by Iran, Libya or Saudi Arabia in southern Africa." Turkish NGOs might play a unifying role with a multilateralism sense rather

than organizational unilateralism. But to play such a role, they need to increase their interactions with African NGOs in cooperative, complementary and supplementary activities.

Clearly the Arab Spring has complicated this role to be played. The conflicts in the Middle East have shown that a war in the Islamic World between different sectarian and racial groups will shatter all attempts of building a contemporary Islamic civilization. Who knows, perhaps the interaction between Turkish NGOs and the African people could create a rapprochement on one hand, and reciprocal civilizational understanding on the other.



IS HUMANITARIAN AID'S NEUTRALITY IN CONFLICT AREAS POSSIBLE?

SUEDA NUR ÇOKADAR

The first step in combating humanitarian crises is undoubtedly the swift elimination of grievances and aid delivery to the victims. Decades of experience have created a technically and legally mature humanitarian aid sector, while at the same time contributing to the formation of a legitimate system. Among these contributions, humanitarian principles come first.

In 1991 United Nations General Assembly, four basic humanitarian aid standards were determined for humanitarian institutions, namely:

- Humanity
- Neutrality
- Impartiality
- Independence

Accordingly, in the context of humanity, It has been declared that regardless of religion, language, nationality, political opinion and socioeconomic position, meeting victims' urgent needs without discrimination should be a priority. Neutrality is acting independently in the delivery of aid, without being attached to any political, economic or military structuring. The principles of neutrality and independence are also important standards to prevent political proximity with any conflicting actors if the humanitarian crisis is in a war zone.

Although there is a general acceptance on humanitarian principles, it should be noted that the debate on humanitarian aid's

neutrality still continues. The main reason for this is that this principle contains several aspects in its essence.

It is generally easy to be impartial to give aid after a natural disaster such as flood, earthquake or drought. The real debate arises in the delivery of humanitarian aid due to war or crisis caused by a political problem. For example, can certain aid provided to civilian victims of war or people who have been deliberately starved by a blockade be carried out in an "impartial" manner? Moreover, if these aids have come to serve some political and strategic agendas of the perpetrator of the crisis, instead of those ending the crisis, how humane will neutrality be? In other words, would it still be humanitarian for aid organizations to carry aid in an "impartial" manner, while one party is constantly trying to produce a humanitarian crisis?

The answers to these and similar questions feed the discussions on the concept of neutrality in humanitarian aid. Therefore, there is a serious difference between those who see humanitarian aid as "bringing food and medicine to people in need" in

a narrow sense and those who defend that “the conditions that cause deprivation should be eliminated”. Humanitarian aid according to the understanding that is increasingly accepted today stands out as all kinds of support to offer people a dignified life, in which they have all their rights; in other words, humanitarian aid is not only about carrying food to the victims, but also struggling to eliminate the man-made conditions that make those people go hungry.

Humanitarian diplomacy has started to come into play in addition to humanitarian aid in environments where civilian lives and property losses are sometimes experienced by political or economic means. Humanitarian crises that cannot be solved by classical diplomacy methods are tried to be solved through humanitarian diplomacy by way of defense, negotiation, communication, measures and agreements. In this respect, as in humanitarian aid, civilian actors have started to take a role in humanitarian

diplomacy against victimization. In the future, basic humanitarian needs as well as aid system with no activism, emphasis on justice, questioning political structures and directing identity, would not be able to sustain its existence alone. Considering that there is enough food, energy, water and basic life substances in the world, then the main problem is not that they are not transported to the environments of conflict and tension, but the problem is about not interfering with the systems that sustain the conflicts.

It should not be forgotten that basically, like other concepts, neutrality has become widespread due to the influence of Western and North American origin political ideologies. Of course, although the existence of universal basic principles benefits humanity in many areas, it is certain that every civilization has its own values. In a globalizing world, it is important for institutions to act jointly in the international system, but the fact that



great powers base their economic, political and intellectual investments on easy action and easy control in this system should not be ignored. Therefore, every principle currently applied is not 100% pragmatic and open to discussion. Likewise, making the concept of neutrality a global formula is not always a correct and pragmatic choice. For example, when delivering aid to victims of war and conflict, instead of focusing on the underlying causes of the conflict, transforming the standards set in humanitarian interventions into forms that should be strictly implemented may not help solve the conflicts and crises fairly.

In today's world, a lot of money, time and diplomatic network are required to intervene in crises and conflicts impartially. Only some aid organizations can hold these resources, so this situation poses a risk of global monopolization in humanitarian aid. First of all, delivering help only to those in need without making a political choice in a place of conflict requires being in a close relationship with all parties in conflict. This is a method that makes it easier to reach many more people in many more regions. However, it is not always easy to reach the needy in the regions controlled by the conflicting parties. For example, many problems are encountered, such as forcing aid to be delivered not to people in need but to the authorities of the conflicting parties or for bribery. In this case, the aid cannot be delivered to the right target, and the groups harming civilians are supported indirectly. The

cost of most aid activities increases for this reason, and armed groups are then supported unwillingly.

For example, it is known that after the Rwanda massacre, most of the aid delivered to the victims by Western organizations fell into the hands of the perpetrators in the Hutu ranks. On the other hand, the principle of neutrality was followed here,

but since the organizations that went to the region for aid did not pursue a strong policy against the rebels who need to be politically boycotted, those who committed the massacre had access to food and financial means to feed their supporters through these aid organizations. In order not to allow such situations to occur, aid organizations should take into account the political output of aid; otherwise, misuse of aids is unavoidable. In addition, inspection mechanisms closest to humanitarian standards in this field should be established as soon as possible.

Perhaps the issue of delivering aid through local groups should be a priority. However, at this point, the issue of who to work with comes up. Is it possible for a local organization to be completely free

from political outcomes? Also, local institutions that will provide solutions and intermediaries regarding their internal problems have their own policies and stand in favor of the conflicting parties. In this case, the obligation to cooperate with neutral institutions can be difficult for the rapid and timely resolution of humanitarian crises. Is it possible to expect a Syrian or

It is known that after the Rwanda massacre, most of the aid delivered to the victims by Western organizations fell into the hands of the perpetrators in the Hutu ranks.

Yemeni charity to remain neutral when someone from their community is being bombed or killed? It will be an important step for aid organizations to develop a dialogue with local parties in order to ensure fair and legal conditions and stand against the persecuting party when necessary.

It can be said that humanitarian aid is a political act at some point. Even if the principle of neutrality is acted upon, the result of the aid may result in some political outcomes. Of course, not every institution is expected to solve problems by making diplomatic breakthroughs. The role of humanitarian aid should not only be to heal the damage caused by conflicts, but also to minimize the likelihood of a humanitarian crisis.

Post-war renewal of infrastructure, rehabilitation and recovery of people, ending dependency on aid, providing the necessary funds to open up jobs and many other needs make intervention of international humanitarian aid inevitable. However, there is no guarantee that the aid receiving countries or communities will use these aids properly. Moreover, even if the aids were used correctly, it is not always possible to reach the targeted result. In this context, the most important responsibility of these institutions is to create the conditions for a fair, humanitarian and legal distribution of humanitarian aid. For this, being a party may be an important first step. This is especially important if this place is a geography under military occupation of foreign powers.

For example, for the people of Gaza, who are under Israeli blockade, mere food parcels or building materials do not contribute to the solution of the problem there, but staying neutral is indirectly beneficial

for the occupiers. The most appropriate humanitarian aid to Gaza is undoubtedly to send humanitarian supplies, but also to work to lifting the blockade. In short, even the reality of Gaza alone is enough to question the influence of the apolitical humanity of Western aid organizations. From this point of view, it is obvious that development assistance is not sustainable without eliminating obstructive political reasons.

In a human-made crisis, it is necessary to act with the principle of neutrality in order to make humanitarian agreements with all parties and to save the injured and prisoners. In this sense, such interventions of organizations dealing with humanitarian aid other than food show that these institutions can be both political and humanitarian. Having a political view is not just an individual characteristic; institutional structures can also develop political attitudes in line with their goals. It seems that the time has come for these attitudes in humanitarian aid institutions to be considered reasonable within the framework of certain norms. Because, choosing both neutrality and being political for the sake of saving more people's lives can create a strong commitment ground for carrying civil movements to a more humane dimension.

The most vital point here is that the mentioned change in approach should be evaluated as an effort to reach more people, not as discrimination due to ideological or political opinions. Humanitarian organizations should act with the aim of inviting the parties to adhere to the law and justice rather than transforming into a political character in conflict environments that victimize civilians.



PTSD; HIDDEN CONSEQUENCE OF THE SYRIAN WAR

KENDA SHAHERHAWASLI

On the 10th year of the Syrian War, Syrians are reviewing the gains and losses caused by the transformation from the people's democratic demands of rights to an armed conflict that has destroyed almost everything. Many reports have assessed the extent of the destruction, infrastructure damages and economic losses after these bloody years.

Local and international media have conveyed images of physical destructions, entire towns reduced to rubble, bombed schools, hospitals and marketplaces, people fleeing from their homes, the injured, and the dead. But even the most professional lens of photographers have not been able to capture the psychological damage and destruction of millions of Syrians who have been subjected to inhuman conditions, some of which amount to war crimes.

The media reported a lot of human stories and showed images of the Syrian people suffering, but it couldn't report their emotional and mental scars and the dreadful memory that they could not overcome.

Traumatic numbers

Wars leave many psychological problems for those who witness it, the most common of which being Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which is an anxiety disorder that may develop after being involved in, or witnessing traumatic events.

PTSD symptoms may be delayed for more than six months after a certain trauma, or it may last from an early age for a long

time, and sometimes it may also appear as a secondary trauma (developed by people caring for someone who has experienced a traumatic incident). PTSD is frequently comorbid with other psychiatric disorders, which can worsen the outcome and complicate possible treatment.

Syria Relief issued a report titled "The Devastation that You Can't See", which tried to measure the PTSD symptoms prevalence degree among Syrian refugees in Turkey and Lebanon, and among the forcibly displaced in Idlib.

The report analyzed PTSD symptoms by gathering the data of 721 research participants in Syria, Lebanon and Turkey. It found that 88% of respondents have experienced at least one life-threatening event and show at least one PTSD symptom thus need to be seen by a medical professional. 42% of them have experienced at least one life-threatening event and have more than 10 out of 15 possible PTSD symptoms (37% in Idlib, 50% in Lebanon, 52% in Turkey). 84% have seven or more symptoms (88% in Idlib, 73% in Lebanon, 80% in Turkey).

The report showed that health efforts to follow up these cases seem to be very



mediocre, with support falling year by year. 64% of refugees in Turkey said that they have better access to mental health services, while only 15% in Lebanon and 1% IDPs in Idlib said that there is some mental health support available to them.

According to the report, refugees are 10 times more likely to develop PTSD than people from non-refugee communities in their respective host countries. This is because they are more likely to have been exposed to traumatic events such as witnessing, experiencing, or becoming victims of violence in the conflict, witnessing or becoming victims of torture, enduring dangerous migration journeys, stresses due to resettlement process, and becoming victims of racism, discrimination and/or prejudice in their host country.

In regards to PTSD symptoms according to the age group, the report said that:

- 96% of people over 60 show PTSD symptom in the whole sample (88% in Lebanon, 100% in Turkey and Idlib).
- 87% of people aged 31-59 show PTSD symptom in the whole sample (84% in Lebanon, 79% in Turkey, 99% in Idlib).
- 83% of people aged 18-30 show PTSD symptom in the whole sample (82% in Lebanon, 68% in Turkey, 100% in Idlib).
- 76% of people under 18 show PTSD symptom in the whole sample (60% in Lebanon, 69% in Turkey, 100% in Idlib)

The most prevalent symptoms reported are the “feeling of constantly on guard,” “blanking on important parts of the traumatic event(s),” “avoiding thoughts, feelings or conversations about the event(s)” and “acting or feeling as if the event(s) were happening again”.

Future responsibilities and challenges

In wars, the perpetrator usually bears responsibility for the occurrence of all losses. But in the Syrian case, the Assad regime bears double responsibility as it confronted its people



and punished them instead of listening to their demands, on top of the heavy material and human losses as a result of its policy.

On the other hand, the international community may not be interested in pushing for a political solution to end the Syrian crisis, and it may not be interested in punishing those involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity. But this does not exempt the international community from providing the necessary assistance to those affected, especially those who suffer from damages that may affect their future lives.

Psychological support should be one of the most prominent priorities for war victims, whether by providing psychological service support to those affected or by qualifying trained cadres capable to deal with these cases, especially with the scarcity of specialists in this field. Like most health issues, PTSD does not go away by living it untreated – in fact, it is likely to get worse.

The sooner the mental health crisis of these people gets treated, the better chance these people have in their future. We are talking about some of the most vulnerable people in the world, having fled their home – at least once – and then having to live in poverty, not

to mention that they also have to deal with the trauma and social stigma that comes with it. People with PTSD will also suffer from further negative impacts on other aspects of their lives such as marital/relationship issues, domestic abuse, substance abuse, harming others, self-harm, even suicide.

The Syrians face difficult future challenges. Assuming that the war has stopped and the political process has begun, with the best scenario of a reconstruction process, managing these psychological and social war effects will remain very difficult. Therapists will be faced with severe challenges in finding the necessary programs and projects in order to treat the psychological rifts and their repercussions.

And even if the best has been done for these victims, all these exerted efforts will remain inadequate and will not achieve their results unless an accountability process for those involved is launched alongside them. A sustainable peace process must be based on transitional justice projects that hold the perpetrators and those involved accountable and restores the material and moral rights of the victims.

End Notes

¹ “The Destruction You Can’t See”, A report into the prevalence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms amongst Internally Displaced Persons

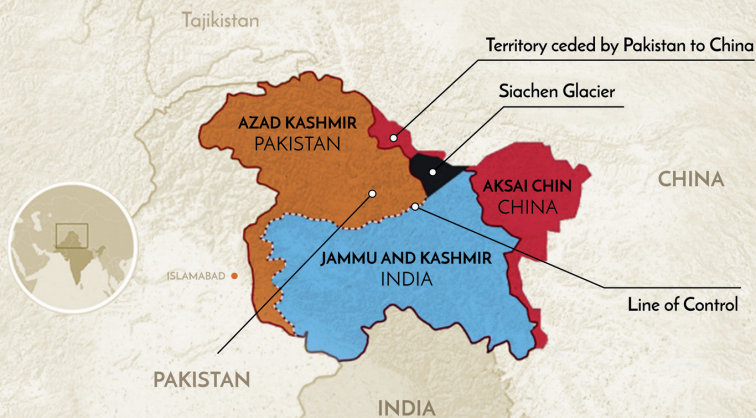
(IDPs) and refugees from the Syrian conflict. Syria relief, 2021. <https://bit.ly/3qIIWPi>

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

THE KASHMIR CRISIS

Kashmir is located in the northernmost part of the Indian Subcontinent.
Kashmir is now divided between **India**, **Pakistan**, and **China**.



KASHMIR'S HISTORICAL OUTLINE:



INDIA'S REPRESSION AND VIOLATIONS AGAINST KASHMIR MUSLIMS

- › Massacres against civilians
- › Illegal detention and torture
- › Disproportionate use of force against civilians
- › Sexual violence
- › Restriction of fundamental rights and freedoms
- › Blocking access to education and healthcare needs
- › Biased judicial decisions

MODELS DEVELOPED TO SOLVE THE KASHMIR PROBLEM

The solutions produced for the the Kashmir problem are clustered around the following five models:

- › Plebiscite
- › Division
- › Independence
- › Confederation
- › Autonomy

© 2021



INSAMER
İHH İNGİLİZ VE SOSYAL ARAŞTIRMALAR MERKEZİ
İHH HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER
İngilizce / English / Türkçe / Turkish

PKK/YPG USES ISIS FOR INTERNATIONAL LEGITIMACY

RIAD DOMAZETI

Taking advantage of the Syrian War, criminals and terrorist suspects who were released from Iraqi prisons gained a great influence on the field. They brought the pro-freedom-and-change revolution initiated by Syrian civilians to a point of criminalizing it and caused a terror wave that spreads all over the world.

Since 2014, the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS and Turkey's military operations in Northern Syria have prevented ISIS from spreading in Iraq. The operations led to the ineffectiveness of many ISIS fighters. Many ISIS members were either killed or gathered in camps controlled by the PYD/YPG - PKK branch in Syria who is ironically supported by the international coalition.

It is estimated that more than 50,000 men and women from different countries joined ISIS, where almost 10% of which come from European countries. Although many ISIS members have been ineffective between 2014 and 2019, recent events show that tens of thousands of them are still held in PYD/YPG-controlled camps as a trump card. Even when most of them are women and children, the PYD/YPG portrays them as terrorists. It appears that the PYD uses these prisoners to legitimize its own 'political existence' and to establish 'official communication' and 'diplomatic relations' internationally.

ISIS is now mostly dissolved in Syria and Iraq, but it is still allowed to operate in a limited and controlled area in the southern deserts of Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa. Because of the presence of a small ISIS group left in these regions, the

PYD/YPG has the opportunity to gain the international coalition's support and increase its legitimacy in the global arena. The PYD/YPG, which puts pressure on Western countries using ISIS as an excuse, gains military, political and diplomatic support from the international community.

Furthermore, ISIS is not an issue limited only to Syria or its surrounding regions; it is an international security problem that closely concerns Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Therefore, it can be seen that this security sensitivity created by ISIS is used against fragile states, mostly the Balkans and Central Asia.

Moreover, legitimizing terrorist organizations like the PYD/YPG threatens the national integrity of sovereign countries like Turkey, Iraq and Syria. These countries have been attacked by the PYD/YPG multiple times with suicide bombings that killed civilians in urban areas. In short, all these developments in the region indicate that the upcoming period will be more complex between NATO allies.

The PYD/YPG, which controls more than 30% of Syria's richest oil fields, natural gas, water and agriculture, uses ISIS prisoners to gain international legitimacy. Reports made by international human rights organizations



especially the UN clearly reveal how the PYD/YPG uses ISIS for their own interest.

In a report published in July 2020 by the World Council of Arameans/Syriacs (WCA), sources from the infamous al-Hol camp in Northeast Syria confirm that the Kurdish forces are releasing ISIS terrorists in return for money. The WCA has sources who work in this camp. They are kept anonymous to protect their safety. They have learned that the Syrian ISIS prisoners there are freed for at least \$1,800 per person, whereas the foreigners are worth at least \$10,000 per person. Note that in this region an average family can live with approximately \$200 per month. Local Aramean Christians condemn this form of corruption, which also threatens the security and stability of this volatile region.

In 2015, the PYD/YPG provoked ISIS to attack Christian villages such as Tel Goran on the Khabur River to annex and occupy them. It is also well-known among Aramean

Christians that the PYD/YPG with its divide-and-rule tactics have been paying a tiny group of Aramean puppets to promote their romanticized and misleading narrative of a democratic society in Rojava (Western Kurdistan). It is a fact that more than 90% of the “Syriac Military Council” (MFS), being the counterpart of the YPG Kurds, consists of non-Christian Arabs and former ISIS fighters who have been recruited by the PYD/YPG Kurds, who ultimately are controlling the MFS.

In another report, the BBC has uncovered details of a ‘secret deal’ that let hundreds of IS fighters and their families escape from Raqqa under the gaze of the US and British-led coalition and Kurdish-led forces who control the city. The deal was arranged by local officials. This happened after four months of fighting that left the city obliterated and almost devoid of people. According to the deal, the lives of Arab, Kurdish and other fighters opposing IS would be spared. But it also enabled hundreds



of IS fighters to escape from the city. At the time, neither the US and British-led coalition, nor the SDF, which it backs, wanted to admit their part in the business. However, footage secretly filmed and passed to BBC shows lorries towing trailers crammed with armed men. Despite an agreement to take only personal weapons, IS fighters took everything they could carry. Ten trucks were loaded with weapons and ammunition.

Moreover, Advisor to the Vice Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mehridin Khairiddinov's visit to Northern Syria in December 2020 to meet with PYD/YPG

terrorists in order to bring back Uzbek citizens clearly shows that the PYD/YPG has used terrorism as a 'political tool' for legitimacy.

Apart from the moral and humanitarian dimension of the political rent, the PYD/YPG shows that the tolerance depicted by the global actors operating intensively in the region – under the name of combating terrorism – to PYD's terrorist trade goes unnoticed. While the PYD tries to show itself as a legitimate actor in the international arena by using ISIS elements in this way, other countries that give political and logistical support to it also turn a blind eye to this situation.

End Notes

<https://wca-ngo.org/wca-news/press-releases/628-pyd-security-releasing-isis-prisoners-in-syria-in-exchange-for-money>,

https://wca-ngo.org/images/Syria_2020/WCA_PR_PYD_Security_Releases_ISIS_prisoners_in_NE_Syria_090720.pdf

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/resources/idt-sh/raqqas_dirty_secret

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

TURKEY'S ENDEMIC WEALTH!

WHAT IS AN
ENDEMIC SPECIES,
AND WHY IS IT
IMPORTANT?

Endemic species are the species that grow or live only in a certain area due to environmental factors such as climate, vegetation, and landforms.

This endemic wealth has the ability to contribute to a country in many areas such as health, science, environment, food, agriculture, animal husbandry, tourism, and trade if protected and used correctly.

TURKEY'S ENDEMIC WEALTH:

Turkey's geographical location, rich climate, vegetation, topography, sea, forest area as well as its various flora and fauna, and the available ecosystems make it home to thousands of endemic species.

15 THOUSAND
PLANT SPECIES
DETECTED IN TURKEY.



4 THOUSAND
ENDEMIC SPECIES
DETECTED IN TURKEY.



ALL SPECIES THAT HAVE BEEN
DETECTED IN TURKEY,
77 THOUSAND



ALL ENDEMIC CREATURES
THAT HAVE BEEN
DETECTED IN TURKEY,
8 THOUSAND



OUR COUNTRY ALONE HAS MORE ENDEMIC
PLANT SPECIES THAN ALL OF EUROPE AND HAS
THE HIGHEST PROPORTION IN THE WORLD.

FACTORS DAMAGING BIODIVERSITY AND ENDEMIC SPECIES

- Destruction of natural areas
- Incorrect urbanization practices
- Climate changes
- Natural disasters
- Environmental pollution
- Bio-smuggling



INEQUALITIES IN GLOBAL EDUCATION

SUEDA NUR ÇOKADAR

Inequality stands before us as a deep-rooted problem of the global world. Every day, poor or underdeveloped geographies face various inequalities and injustices starting with income inequality, covering social and public spheres. Inequality occurs when human beings are deprived of their rights due to structural problems when in fact those exact rights constitute the parts that shape human life.

One of the fundamental rights is the right to education. And the aim of this right is to provide quality education as well as the opportunity to develop suitable education for each individual. However, 17% of children, adolescents and young people – 258 million of them – do not go to school. This figure was 374.67 million in 2000. Although promising numbers have been reached today compared to the last twenty years, the participation rates in education do not seem sufficient despite the increasing opportunities.

Education is vital both for an adult and a child. The legal foundations of this need were laid in the middle of the 20th century. The definition of education as a human right is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education (CEID) in 1960, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1966 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981, and other global human rights treaties. Although the conventions are not binding

for states, the commitments made after the negotiations have also managed to improve education conditions. The requirements of the right to education are:

- Primary education that is free, compulsory and universal
- Secondary education, including technical and vocational, that is generally available, accessible to all and progressively free
- Higher education, accessible to all on the basis of individual capacity and progressively free
- Fundamental education for individuals who have not completed education
- Professional training opportunities
- Equal quality of education through minimum standards
- Quality teaching and supplies for teachers
- Adequate fellowship system and material condition for teaching staff

Undoubtedly, education is the only tool that will strengthen the socio-economic status of individuals and the development and social transformation of states. Human and

economic development needs are achievable through education. The ability to produce and use knowledge, building social peace, and combating poverty is largely parallel to the substitution of educational opportunities. Data shows that if all adults could complete at least their secondary education, poverty could be reduced by more than half. From here it can be understood how paramount education is.

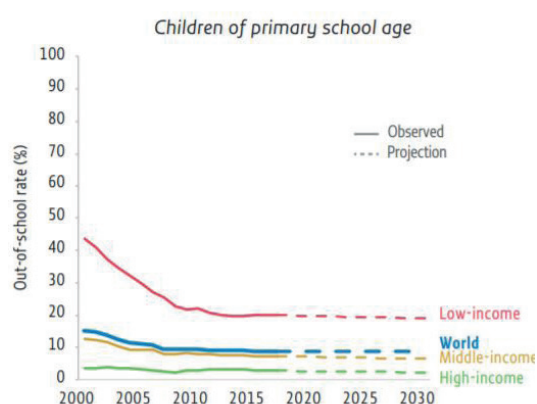
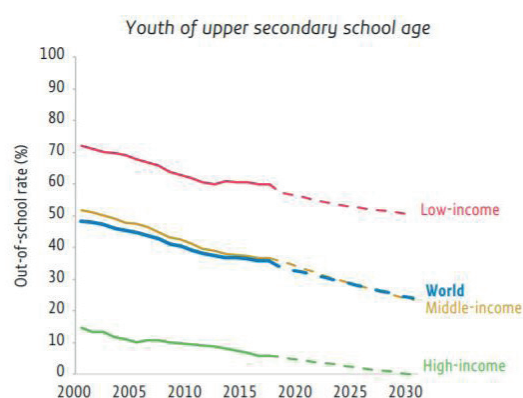
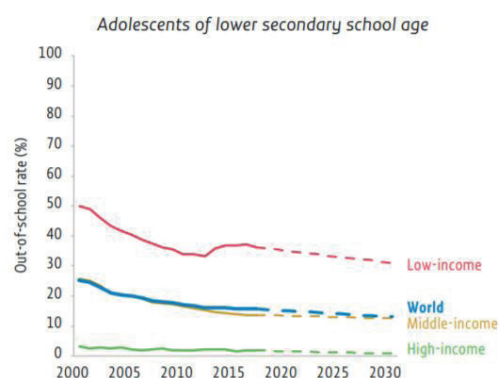
For all these to happen, an inclusive and accessible education system is needed in the society. At this point, there are two important steps in the education journey starting from primary school to higher education:

- Increasing enrollment rate to substitute access to education.
- Ensuring education quality.

Schooling Rates and Inequalities

The major contributing factor that causes poor education is low enrollment rates. In general, school attendance rate is lower in low-income countries - especially in sub-Saharan African and South Asian countries - compared to high and middle-income countries. The graphics below shows the rates of students who do not attend primary, secondary and high school levels.

From the graphics, it is understood that the rate of children who are not attending primary school has not changed since 2008. At the secondary and high school level, again the worst picture is observed in low-income countries. While enrollment rate gained momentum after 2000, the drop in the number of students who are out of school in low-income countries stopped since 2010. The most important reason for the slowdown in the course of recovery is the suspension of education aid to low-income countries after the 2008 global economic crisis. However, aid accounts for one-fifth



Source: UIS

of public expenditure on education in these countries.

The inadequacy of governments' education funds and inspection mechanisms makes it difficult to access education. Although the



number of children who cannot go to school is decreasing, there seems to be an imbalance in the budget allocated for education. In world average, 4.9% of the GDP budget is allocated to education expenditures, while this rate is 5.1% in developed countries and 4% in low-income countries. Considering that the GDP of less developed countries is 59 times less than middle-income countries and 100 times less than high-income countries, the lack of budget allocation for education clearly shows the need for more assistance.

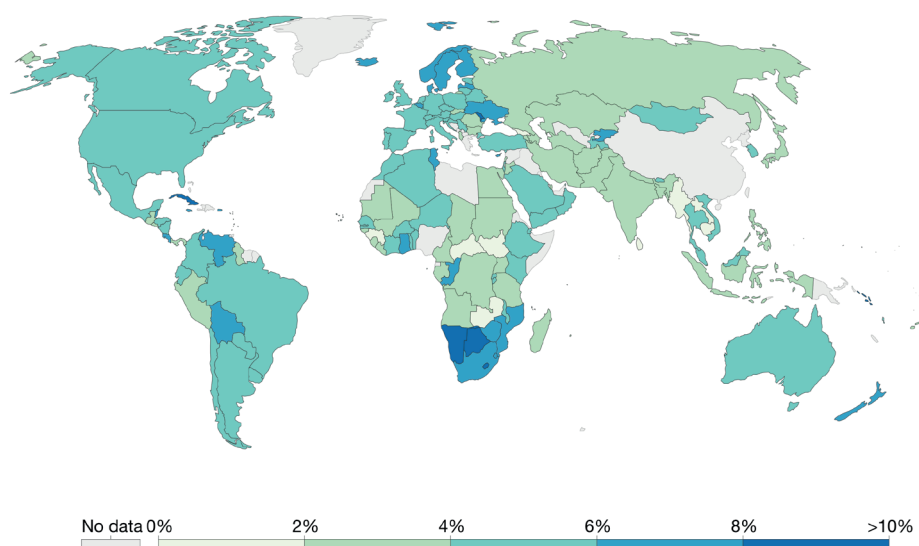
Education cannot continue without school buildings, sufficient number of classrooms, sufficient number of teachers, educational materials and equipment, adequate nutrition and cleaning facilities for students and teachers. The fact that the budget for free or low-paid education is less compared to other public expenditures delays investments in education. The outcomes of the delay mostly show itself at the age of school attendance.

Being able to complete school on time is as important as going to school. In many low and middle-income countries, late entries, high repeat rates, dropouts and late re-entries are common. In geographies where

educational investments do not grow parallel with population growth and where there is a high poor population (the majority of which are sub-Saharan African countries), the rate of completing primary, secondary and high school on time is respectively 68%, 41% and 19%. In addition, the fact that low and middle-developed countries have more rural areas also negatively affects schooling rates. Contrary to the dense population in the city, adequate educational opportunities cannot be provided for fewer students in the countryside.

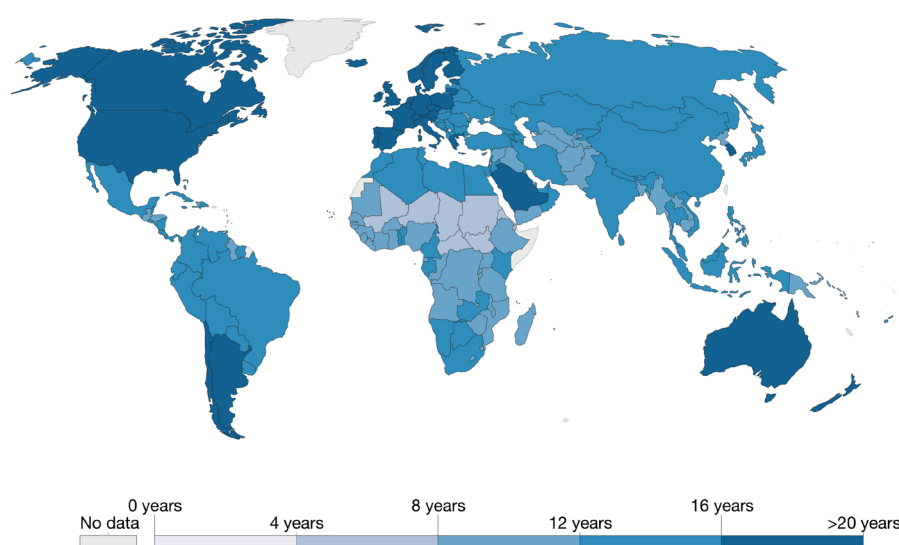
The reasons behind students' interrupted education are the lack of educational opportunities, war and security threats, gender discrimination, having to work due to economic difficulties, being married at an early age, and discrimination due to disabilities.

It should also be noted that children and adolescents living in camps are among the most disadvantaged groups in terms of attending school. Due to wars and conflicts, 32% of the world's population consists of refugees and 38% of Internally Displaced Persons. Approximately 50% of the immigrants, i.e. 31 million, are children. Considering that a significant part



Budget for Education from GDP (%)

Source: World Bank (2012)



Expected years of schooling, 2017

Source: World Bank

of the population, who are often unregistered, are deprived of education and that educational opportunities are scarce for these refugee children, the importance of global cooperation in building educational institutions increases.

At this point, in order for education to be accessible, it is necessary to ensure that school-age children continue to attend school, beyond providing schools and equipment.

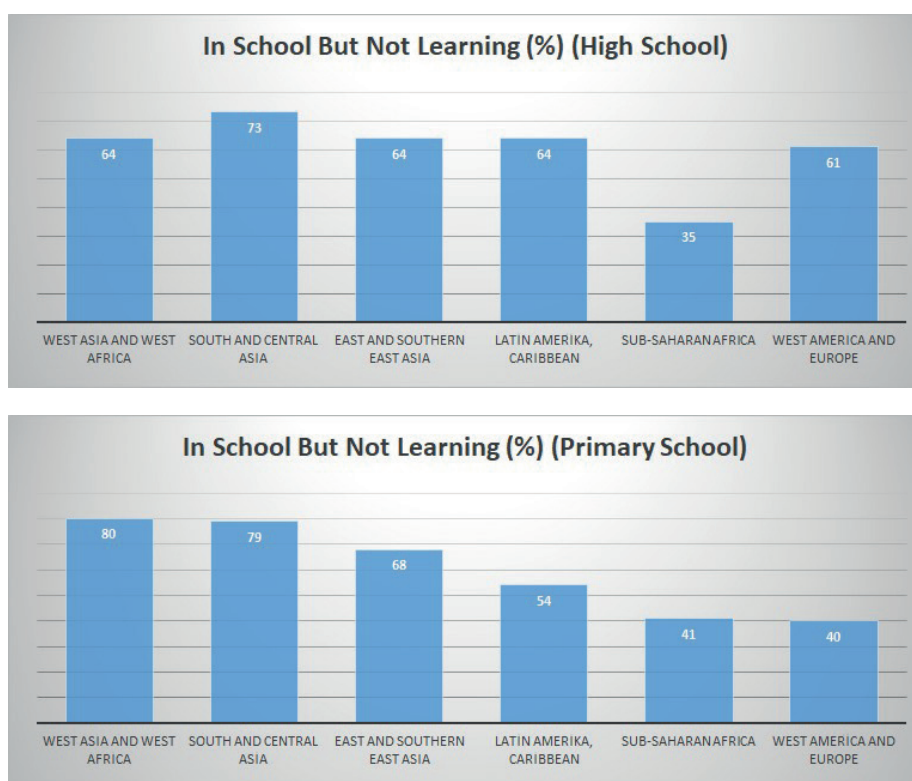
Quality and Equality in Education

In order for the existence and accessibility of a school, educator, and equipment to be sustainable, education must be of high quality and inclusive. Two-thirds of 617 million students do not have sufficient reading and mathematics knowledge. In this case, we are far from the assumption that the more widespread educational institutions are, the higher the level of education will progress. The first in the priority needs list will be the preparation of a suitable and applicable curriculum for quality education and the training of well-equipped teachers.

We can see that educated ignorance is higher in middle and high-income countries as opposed to schooling. The fact that a large group of people who receive education is deprived of basic reading and mathematics skills or do not continue education other than the required levels indicate that we need a revision in our view of education. There is a need for schools where students not only learn the basics, but also to think participatory, creatively and critically. When the presence of 759 million adults with no education is added to these educational institutions that continue to produce graduates, the spread of lifelong learning culture becomes important. In other words, there is a need to strengthen the educational level by developing information sharing and continuous trainings through the state, private sector, foundations and associations or international organizations, which are not limited to schools.

A sustainable education model also includes the construction of an inclusive education system. There is a need for more than state policies, namely a social consensus, and this education includes lifelong learning. One of





Source: UNESCO

the goals of the education system is to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged people. These people include orphans living in poverty, those who need special education, those who are disabled, belonging to ethnic-religious or linguistic minority, immigrants, internally displaced, refugees and female students.

Often times, policies and cultural pressures can feed discrimination. Every child and young person should have access to all stages of education, from primary to high school. However, only 68% of the countries have inclusive education laws, policies or strategies. And again, only 17% of countries have policies with comprehensive provisions for all students. In other words, the disabled, linguistic minorities, gender discriminated and ethnic and indigenous groups are only mentioned in the laws, but their legal protection is not fulfilled.

Inequalities can come in different ways. For example, school attendance rates by gender may have inequality in two different situations. In only 30 of 116 countries, 90 women against every 100 men can complete their pre-secondary education, while in only 17 countries, less than 90 men against 100 women can complete school. For example, while 33 women against 100 men can finish secondary education in Afghanistan, 68 men can finish school in every 100 women in Honduras. The freedom to continue education must be guaranteed so that a balanced picture can be established, regardless of gender.

Another example that has been left unresolved for many years is that the language spoken at home and the Lingua Franca (common language) of the country are not the same, or as mentioned before, in places where life in rural areas is high and poverty rates are

high, even low-proficiency learning cannot be achieved. Before starting education life in geographies with language problems, common language education and teaching the mother tongue in schools and special scholarship programs in places where there is a lot of poverty will play a savior role.

Moreover, even if they complete their high school education, most of the students do not continue to higher education due to disadvantageous reasons such as poverty, gender, region of residence, ethnic origin, language, wealth difference, or religion. This stands as a serious obstacle to scientific progress.

Groups and countries that are socio-economically disadvantaged in terms of work are somehow the most deprived of the right to education. Disadvantaged groups have increased with students who have difficulties in accessing technological tools and the internet as a result of the transition of schools to the distant learning model due to COVID-19 pandemic measures.

In conclusion, it appears that most inequalities are related to poverty. Eradication of poverty needs long-term solutions.



For this reason, it is necessary to increase scholarship opportunities for poor students with the support of international aid funds. Education policies, local governments, health institutions, rehabilitation services, ministries related to social protection, sociologists, investors, and aid organizations should play an active role in realizing inclusive education services.

References

- UNESCO. 2019. New Methodology Shows that 258 Million Children, Adolescents and Youth Are Out of School, Fact Sheet no. 56, September 2019.
- World Bank, Number of out of school children, World, <https://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/ed-stats>
- UNESCO. 2020. Global Education Monitoring Report Summary 2020: Inclusion and education: All means all. Paris, UNSECO.
- UNESCO. 2019. Meeting commitments: are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?. Paris. UNESCO.
- UNESCO. 2017. More Than One-Half of Children and Adolescents Are Not Learning Worldwide, Fact Sheet No. 46, September 2017.
- World Inequality Database on Education, <https://www.education-inequalities.org/>,
- Gümüş, Arife, Türkiye’de Eğitim Sisteminin Bir Felsefesi Var mı?, İlke Analiz, 16 Şubat 2021, <https://www.ilkeanaliz.net/2021/02/16/turkiyede-egitim-sisteminin-bir-felsefesi-var-mi/>
- UNESCO, What you need to know about the right to education, 26 November 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/news/what-you-need-know-about-right-education>.
- Dağ, A. Emin (ed), İslam Dünyasında Eğitim, İNSAMER, İstanbul, 2017.
- UNESCO, 2019, Migration, displacement and education: Building Bridges, not Walls Arap States, GEM Report, Paris. UNESCO.



PRIVATE SECURITY & MILITARY COMPANIES: PRIVATIZATION OF WARS

HUZEYME MOHSEN

The emergence of private security and military companies and the use of private mercenaries in international armed conflicts is due to the new international order and the emergence of internal and regional conflicts such as ethnic conflicts and terrorism, which affects the interests of major countries and the protection of their facilities. They have replaced regular armed forces in foreign wars, and the dedication to this role has helped escalate security threats and the decline in the ability of states alone to face these challenges, as they are no longer the only party that controls the use of military force.

Wars burden states' budget and resources, causing disturbance in the economy and humanitarian aspects, as well as the loss of military forces that fall on the battlefield. This caused private security services to grow rapidly especially since the Iraq war; and these companies have brought about many crises, from plotting coups in Africa to control oil in Angola, diamonds in Sierra Leone, as well as crises from the Balkans to Afghanistan and Iraq. After that, it gradually shifted its activities from purely military work to protection work, including releasing hostages and providing advice/training to local forces and security personnel. Mostly, former military and intelligence men take advantage of their expertise and networks of relations with the military establishment in order to profit through their activities.

Mercenary; the Shadow Army

Governments prefer to employ mercenaries because they view wars pragmatically. Since mercenaries consider themselves as part of a

military company – the name they prefer to call themselves instead of “mercenaries” – and they generally belong to fragile societies, they tend to turn into rebels who are used more in coups and conspiracies due to the ease of movement and infiltration across countries. Their pay also exceeds that of official armies, and they are not subject to any inspection or control authority meaning they can violate the rules of engagement adhered by official armies.

Privatization of Wars in the Arab World

Privatization of wars refers to states giving up financial funding for a war, reducing the number of soldiers and relying on irregular armed organizations, hence reducing the role of the state and its public institutions and increasing the contribution of the private sector. In this case countries have come to rely on strategies of military interventions and proxy wars that are implemented by military companies in particular. Despite the great difference in the contexts of developed countries, countries in transitional



stages, countries in post-conflict stages and developing countries, there is a common denominator that privatization of security services occurs when the state is unable or unwilling to play this role.

Privatization of wars is the new policy used by warlords due to the alliance of these companies with the arms industry complexes that benefit from armed conflicts and violence. Private military companies would cross borders and exploit security crises that many Arab countries are going through to enter the “market of death” in exchange for billions of dollars paid to them. They recruit their mercenaries from different parts of the world to combat in battles without values. From Iraq to Libya, Syria and Yemen, private military companies from the US, Russia and the UAE are active on behalf of countries and armies that seek to reduce human expenditures and losses and avoid diplomatic embarrassment and legal

*Privatization
of wars is
the new
policy used
by warlords
due to the
alliance
of these
companies
with the
arms
industry
complexes
that benefit
from armed
conflicts and
violence.*

accountability, especially when war crimes occur.

Private military companies are active in the Arab world with branches and extensions in many countries and with different names, in addition to local and international security companies estimated in the hundreds, and their activities differ from military companies in the nature of their tasks. While military companies carry out combat missions, recruit mercenaries, and support armed forces and militias on the ground, security companies focus on protecting personalities and facilities, conduct training, give security advice, and work in the fields of intelligence and cyber warfare. The tasks of military companies may overlap with security companies and sometimes complement each other. The French Foreign Ministry estimates the



revenues of private security companies at about \$400 billion; a research states that the total profit of these companies in the Arab world between 2011 and 2014 is \$45 billion.

Among the most famous military companies that recruit mercenaries to fight in Arab trouble spots are:

Blackwater

This is a notorious American company that was involved in the murders of Iraqi civilians. Four of its members were convicted of imprisonment between 30 years and life for killing 14 Iraqi civilians including two children in Baghdad in 2007, in a massacre that sparked international outrage over the use of mercenaries in wars. However, US President Donald Trump pardoned the four Blackwater members, which triggered Iraqi discontent. The name “Blackwater” emerged with the US occupation of Iraq in 2003, and the company obtained security contracts in the country.

The company was founded in 1997 in accordance with US laws by former US Navy SEAL officer Eric Prince. It relies on retired mercenaries and special forces from around the world and provides its military and security services to governments and individuals with US administration’s blessing. Following the scandals that took place in Iraq, Blackwater changed its name to Xe Service in 2009, then Academi in 2011. It was then acquired by competing companies and went under the banner of Constelles Holding Group, which operates in 20 countries and employs more than 16,000 people.

*Russia's
Wagner is
one of the
most famous
military
companies
operating
in the Arab
region
following
Blackwater's
Nisour
Square
massacre.*

Constelles is currently concentrated in Yemen, where media including the New York Times revealed that Prince signed contracts with the UAE and Saudi Arabia to fight in Yemen alongside the Arab coalition. The number of Constelles’ recruits in 2015 reached about 1,500 mercenaries from Colombia, South Africa, Mexico, Panama, El Salvador and Chile, some of whom were killed in the battles, especially in Taiz.

Wagner

Russia’s Wagner is one of the most famous military companies operating in the Arab region following Blackwater’s Nisour Square massacre. Wagner’s activity in the Arab world began in Syria in 2014, where it oversees two security companies, namely ISIS

Hunters and Sanad for guard and security services. Wagner trains the two companies’ elements to protect Russian investments such as phosphate mines and oil and gas fields in the Syrian Badia and Deir Ezzor Governorate.

Wagner and ISIS Hunters’ involvement in the Syrian War is evident since about 250 personnel – and fighters from the regime’s army and the supporting forces – were killed in a US air strike on February 8, 2018. In this raid, 20 members of ISIS Hunters were killed as they advanced to control the oil fields east of the Euphrates River, which was controlled by ISIS.

Wagner uses ISIS Hunters and Sanad in Syria before transferring hundreds of them to Libya to fight alongside Khalifa Haftar’s

militia. However, Wagner does not depend only on mercenaries loyal to Bashar al-Assad, it also includes a long list of nationalities from Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and even Kazakhstan. In view of the calm of the Syrian front in recent years, Wagner concentrated its main force in Libya, especially in Al-Jufra and Sirte governorates, and its activity extended to the southwest, which France considers its historical area of influence.

The announcement of a Russian naval base construction in Port Sudan on the Red Sea in 2020 will attract more Wagner mercenaries to East Africa. Wagner began its activities in Sudan in 2018, under the cover of the Minvest company for gold exploration, but the US included it in its sanctions list on July 15, 2020, and accused it of trying to undermine Sudan's democracy. Washington imposed sanctions on Yevgeny Prigozhin, head of the Wagner Group, nicknamed Putin's chef, and the company itself was included in the sanctions list.

Black Shield

This UAE security company was not known until the news of young Sudanese transferred to the UAE to work in the private guard surfaced. It was found that the company trained them militarily to transport them to Libya as mercenaries alongside Haftar and to Yemen. Although Black Shield denied the accusations revealed by The Guardian on December 25, 2019, the file quickly turned into a public issue after hundreds of Sudanese protested in front of the Emirati embassy in Khartoum last July.

In early December, legal advisor for the Sudanese victims Omar Al-Obaid announced the launch of his preparations to file regional and international lawsuits against 10 Emirati, Sudanese and Libyan figures, on charges of human trafficking. A Human Rights Watch report and interviews with the victims reveals that Black Shield

made contract with more than 270 young Sudanese men to work in the country as security guards, but deceived them after a long series of procedures and plunged them into "the furnace of war in Libya" without their knowledge. The report states that the Sudanese youth found themselves side by side with Haftar fighters, they were told that their mission was to guard oil installations surrounding the Oil Crescent, "but with time they became involved in hostilities."

Israel and Iran's Investment in Security Companies

In addition to Blackwater, Wagner and Black Shield, there are other private military and security companies operating in the Arab countries, such as the giant G4S. G4S was established in 1901 in Denmark and is headquartered in the UK. It has the largest private army in the world with more than 533,000 personnel of various nationalities. G4S has branches in 85 countries, with 14 branches in the Arab world, nine of which in the Gulf states, particularly the UAE. It assumed some duties at Guantanamo Bay, and its annual income is \$8.8 billion, according to the French Monte Carlo radio station, but its many scandals and the Corona crisis have brought it into financial crises.

Israel employed 8,000 G4S personnel to guard the Ofer prison and administering checkpoints in the West Bank. Given the pressure exerted by the BDS campaign on it, G4S decided to withdraw from it. Israeli security researcher Yossi Melman reveals that 10 private Israeli security companies, including Swiss-based AGT, operate in Arab countries such as Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Oman, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. With the normalization of relations of some countries with Israel, it is expected that security companies will infiltrate



heavily into the Gulf states, led by the UAE, to provide their services in guarding and providing cyber security.

Media reports also disclose Shiite militias operating in Iraq and Syria as security companies affiliated with Iran, but they are more of “ideological mercenaries” coming from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iraq to fight not only for money but for the sect as well. These militias close to Iran established security companies in Syria, represented

in the Al-Areen Guard Services, Shield for Security Guards, and Al-Fajr for Guard and Protection Services.

The growing role of global military and security companies at the expense of the traditional Arab armies would make these countries lose their independence in policy-making and have their security exposed to any future threats. If these countries continue being on the warpath, don't they know where they are heading to?

INFOGRAPHICS

www.insamer.com/en

EAST TURKISTAN



WHERE IS EAST TURKISTAN?

East Turkistan, historically known as the eastern part of the Turkish homeland; is surrounded by *Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India, Kashmir and Tibet*. The *Taklamakan Desert* covers one third of its 1.8 million km² area.



The East Turkistan territory, or what China claims as "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region", constitutes

ONE SIXTH of China's territory.



INTERMENT CAMPS

Any daily life practices that show a commitment to the religion and traditions of Uyghur people, are considered crimes by the *Chinese leadership* and labelled as "*terrorism, discrimination, extremism*". The people of East Turkistan who try to preserve their traditions are being held in one of the **1200** internment camps established, which serve as centers of *repression and torture*.

It is reported that there are at least **3 MILLION** people from *East Turkistan* in the *internment camps* that were first established in **2014** and gained a massive dimension since **2016**.



VIOLATIONS

Inside China's established internment camps, all kinds of crimes are committed against *the East Turkistan Muslims*, including *arbitrary use of force*, systematic abolition of *freedom, investigation on their culture and beliefs*, *ideological repression, harassment, rape, physical and psychological torture, murder and genocide*.



HISTORY OF OCCUPATION

The end of "*the Republic of East Turkistan*" and the beginning of *Chinese occupation*.

1949

1950-1960

Change in the demographic structure and the *deportation* of **500,000 people** from the region

Han Chinese fostered *ethnic conflicts* among the Uyghur Turks

1990'S

Increased *repressive practices* and restriction on *freedom of worship* behind the claim of fighting terror

2000

Hundreds of people were *killed* in the 5th of July events in Urumchi

2009

Internment camps establishment was made public, *detentions* under the pretext of fighting terrorism began

2016



3 million people were taken to *internment camps*

2020



Visit insamer.com/en
for Infographics, Muslim Minorities
and Crisis Monitoring.



 /insamerenglish
 /insamerenglish

GOODNESS

ANYTIME

ANYWHERE



>>>



iHH
SEARCH & RESCUE