

# Short Biographies

## German-Turkish Roundtable on International Affairs (GTRT) 2026 "War-Making and Peacebuilding in a World of Disorder"

24 – 25 March 2026

Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Ludwigkirchplatz 3–4, 10719 Berlin

**Sinem Adar** is Head of the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP). Prior to that she was Research Associate at CATS. Her work focuses on Turkish foreign and security policy, and domestic politics. Since 2024, she has been leading, with Muriel Asseburg, the working group entitled "[Autocratisation as a Challenge for German and European Foreign Policy](#)" at the SWP. Adar holds a PhD from Brown University in the US and a Master's degree from the London School of Economics.

**Hürcan Aslı Aksoy** is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin. Her research at CATS focuses on Turkish domestic politics and Turkey's foreign and security policy, in particular in the Middle East and Africa, as well as on Turkey-EU relations. Her academic research interests are processes of democratisation and autocratisation with a focus on changing state-society relations, gender and politics in Turkey and the Middle East as well as Ankara's role as a middle power in changing geopolitical landscape. Before joining CATS, she was a research associate at the Chair of Middle Eastern Politics and Society at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg.

**Yasir Atalan** is a deputy director and data fellow in the Futures Lab at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. His research focuses on technology and international security, with particular emphasis on how artificial intelligence is reshaping conflict dynamics. He also studies the changing character of warfare and civil-military relations. Atalan's research has been featured in the New York Times, CNN, Financial Times, BBC, Foreign Policy, Business Insider, War on the Rocks, and Defense One, as well as in peer-reviewed journals. He also serves as a faculty fellow at the Center for Data Science at American University, where he contributes to computational social science initiatives. Previously, he worked as a replication analyst for the journal Political Analysis at Cambridge University Press. He received his PhD in political science from American University, an MA in Middle Eastern studies from King's College London.

## Short Biographies

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"War-Making and Peacebuilding in a World of Disorder"

CATS  
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Turkey Studies

SWP

**Yaşar Aydın** is Research Associate at the Centre for Applied Turkey Studies (CATS) at German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) with a background in sociology and economics. His research interests include international affairs, geopolitics and German Turkish relations, as well as migration, integration and diaspora, and the socio-political and economic effects of migration in Turkish-German context. He previously worked as a researcher at the Hamburg Institute for International Economics, the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung/ bpb) and as a guest lecturer at the Turkish-German University in Istanbul. He is author of numerous articles in scientific journals and books on migration, Turkish political system and Turkish ultranationalism. Dr Aydın received a graduate degree in social economy from the University of Hamburg, a master's in sociology from the University of Lancaster, and a doctorate from the University of Hamburg.

**Emadeddin Badi** is a Senior Fellow at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime and a consultant specialising in governance, organised crime, and security sector reform across Libya, Sudan, North Africa, and the Sahel. His work focuses on the political and institutional dynamics shaping conflict, stabilisation, and reform in fragile and transitional settings, with particular expertise in civil-military coordination, disarmament and reintegration, migration governance, and the role of armed actors in political transitions. He previously served as a non-resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, where he advised on US and European policy towards North Africa. Over the past decade, he has worked with and advised institutions including the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the United States Institute of Peace, the European Union, the Danish Institute for Human Rights, and DCAF. He is also a Fellow at the Centre on Armed Groups, and holds an MSc from SOAS, University of London.

**Evren Balta** is Professor of Political Science at Özyeğin University in Istanbul. She is also Academic Coordinator at the TÜSİAD Global Politics Forum. Her research focuses on citizenship, democratic backsliding, Turkish foreign policy, and the intersections of domestic and international politics. Her books include, among others, *The American Passport in Turkey: National Citizenship in the Age of Transnationalism* (with O. Altan-Olcay, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020) and *The Age of Uneasiness (İletişim, 2019)*. She has been a visiting scholar at Harvard, Columbia, NYU, and the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM, Vienna), and is currently an affiliate scholar at the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C.

**Çerağ Esra Çuhadar** is an associate professor at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey, where she has taught since 2006, and serves as Head of Research of the Ottawa Dialogue at the University of Ottawa, Canada. With over three decades of experience in dialogue facilitation, mediation, and conflict assessment, she was selected in 2023 to join the United Nations standby team of senior mediation advisers as a process design and inclusion expert. Dr Çuhadar received her M.A. and Ph.D. from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, along with an advanced graduate certificate in applied conflict resolution. Her research focuses on inclusive peace processes, mediation, track-two diplomacy, civil society in peacebuilding, negotiation pedagogy, and political leadership. She has authored more than 50 articles in books and leading academic journals such as *Political Psychology*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *International Studies Review*, and *International Studies Perspectives*. In addition to numerous research grants, she has received several awards, including the Kadir Has Foundation Promising Scientist Award (2025), the Young Scientist Award from the Turkish Science Foundation (2013), the Jennings Randolph Senior Research Fellowship at the United States Institute of Peace (2018), and a Fulbright Senior Scholarship (2011). Her extensive

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"War-Making and Peacebuilding in a World of Disorder"

CATS  
Centre for Applied  
Turkey Studies

SWP

mediation career includes serving as a UN mediation adviser (2024-present), senior expert on dialogue and inclusion at the United States Institute of Peace (2020-2023), regional mediator for the World Bank (2011-2020), and OSCE advisor.

**Galip Dalay** is Senior Consulting Fellow at Chatham House, non-resident senior fellow at the Middle East Council on Global Affairs, and doctoral researcher at Oxford University. He was previously Mercator-IPC Senior Fellow at Istanbul Policy Center and at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) & Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at Robert Bosch Academy. Dalay's research focuses on the question of regionalism, regional order and governance in the Middle East, Turkish politics and foreign policy, Middle Eastern politics, Turkish - Russian relations, history and politics of Turkish- Western/ European relations, and history of post-colonial and post-imperial forms of internationalism. His work has appeared on Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Al Jazeera, Project Syndicate, CNN, the National Interest, Newsweek, Le Monde, Internationale Politik, DW Opinion, Open Democracy, Middle East Eye and The World Politics Review.

**Esra Elmas** is a policy advisor and scholar-practitioner in peace and conflict studies. She is a member of the board of directors of the Istanbul Bilgi University Conflict Resolution Center and the Çankaya University Women's Studies Center. She has over 15 years of experience in management and advisory positions with international NGOs focusing on human rights, democratization, and conflict resolution. She has previously worked as a Senior Analyst and Adviser as well as Head of Türkiye Program with the Democratic Progress Institute. She is a member of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network's Türkiye Antenna.

**Serhat Güvenç** received is currently Professor of International Relations and the Dean of the College of Economics, Administrative Sciences at Kadir Has University. Previously, he held faculty positions at Istanbul Bilgi University (2000-2010) and lectured as visiting Assistant Professor of History at the University of Chicago (2006), as adjunct professor of international relations at Koç University (2008 and 2009) and Boğaziçi University (2014). Professor Güvenç is an occasional contributor to Medyascope (news portal). He is also a trustee of the Foundation of Lausanne Treaty Emigrants.

**Hozan Ibrahim** is Founder and Executive Director of IMPACT, supporting hundreds of Syrian organizations and activists while managing dialogue tracks and European diaspora activities. A development expert and tutor at Hertie School of Governance, he brings expertise in artificial intelligence, data analysis, and management. Active in Syrian political and civic movements since 2002, Ibrahim has contributed to Track 1.5 and Track 2 initiatives including the Geneva process. He oversees IMPACT's governance projects and serves as a recognized expert on Northeast Syria, countering violent extremism, and Middle Eastern non-state actors. His work bridges academic research with practical civil society development, positioning IMPACT as a key platform for Syrian peacebuilding efforts.

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CATS  
Centre for Applied  
Turkey Studies

SWP

**Wolfram Lacher** is a Senior Associate at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin. His research focuses on violent conflict in Libya and the Sahel, and relies on frequent fieldwork. He has published articles in *Violence: An International Journal*, *Civil Wars*, *Survival*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Dissent*, amongst others. He is the author of "Libya's Fragmentation: Structure and Process in Violent Conflict" and co-editor of "Violence and Social Transformation in Libya". He studied Arabic and African languages and history, conflict and development, and holds a PhD in political science from Humboldt University in Berlin.

**Markus Mayer** is Head of the Competence Centre Crisis Response and Peacebuilding within the governance and conflict department of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), providing thematic leadership to the design of programs, methodologies, and approaches in key areas such as conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding, transitional aid, disaster risk management, climate security, forced displacement and migration governance. Before that he was International Alert's Asia Director covering peacebuilding work in Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka. He also worked for the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, as Resident Representative to Sri Lanka for promoting academic collaboration and research. For over 25 years he has focused on issues related to socio-economic dimensions of conflict, peace process management, Diaspora engagement and business for peace interventions. He holds an PhD from Heidelberg University on the topic of youth conflict and development planning.

**Theodore Murphy** began his career in foreign affairs managing emergency response missions for Doctors Without Borders, in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan. Grappling with new challenges to humanitarianism encountered in these countries, he published/lectured on defending humanitarianism in the context of the Greater War on Terror. Following a masters' degree in London, Theo took over Amnesty International's Sudan work while also writing for the International Crisis Group. From 2007-2011, Theo worked in conflict resolution/mediation with the United Nations and in the non-governmental sector in the Horn of Africa and Middle East with the Geneva based Center for Humanitarian Dialogue. He served as Expert Advisor to the AU/UN mediation team in Darfur in 2007-08. In 2011, Theo was appointed by the UN Secretary General to the Panel of Experts for Libya where he served in the post of Regional Expert. As a Course Director and Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Theo designed and led accredited training for diplomats, military, and multilateral staff on the topic of Engagement with Non-State Actors. Working closely with the German MFA after relocating to Berlin, from 2012 to 2020, Theo oversaw mediation initiatives throughout the Horn of Africa. Amongst others, he negotiated an internationally recognized political agreement in Darfur and supported efforts towards creating a Red Sea Forum. Most recently, Theo established the Africa Program at the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). In a nod to Africa's growing geopolitical relevance, Theo designed the Program around shared interests between the two continents: peace/security, trade, climate policy, renewable energy and critical raw materials, and exploration of a common approach to changing global order. Theo holds degrees from McGill University and the School for Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) London.

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"War-Making and Peacebuilding in a World of Disorder"

CATS  
Centre for Applied  
Turkey Studies

SWP

**Max Mutschler** is senior researcher and project leader at bicc - Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies. His research centres around the development and proliferation of arms and military technology: how they affect warfare and how they can be controlled. Before joining bicc in 2015, he was a researcher at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) and lecturer at the University of Tübingen's Institute of Political Science. Max Mutschler received his PhD in Political Science from the University of Tübingen with a dissertation on arms control in space.

**Taha Özhan** is an academic and writer based in Turkey. He holds a PhD in politics and international relations and is currently research director at the Ankara Institute. He was an academic visitor at Oxford University (2019-20), served as chairman of the Turkish parliament's foreign affairs committee (2015-18), and was a senior adviser to the Turkish prime minister (2014-16). He has published on global and regional politics, political and IR theory, and political movements in the Middle East. His latest book is *Turkey and the Crisis of Sykes-Picot Order* (2015).

**Volker Perthes**, currently a Senior Distinguished Fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) and a freelanced author, is a former UN Under-Secretary-General (January 2021 to March 2024). Among other things, he served as Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Sudan and Head of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). Prior to this, from 2005 to 2020, Perthes was Executive Chairman and Director of SWP (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik), the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. In 2015-2016, he also served as UN Assistant Secretary-General and Senior Advisor to the UN Special Envoy for Syria. Perthes earned his doctoral degree in 1990 from the University of Duisburg. He was an assistant professor at the American University of Beirut from 1991 to 1993, a professor at Humboldt University Berlin from 2006 to 2019, and also taught international relations at other schools. Perthes is a renowned scholar, speaker and policy advisor, and author of numerous books and articles on the Middle East, Europe, and international affairs.

**Osman Sert** is Research Director at Ankara Institute and Panorama Turkey. As a journalist, he covered economy, Prime Minister's office and diplomacy respectively. He was diplomatic reporter for Kanal 7, diplomatic editor at CNN Turk and Jerusalem Bureau Chief of TRT. He served as advisor of Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009-2014) and Prime Minister (2014-2016) of Turkey. He is editor of [perspektif.online](http://perspektif.online), Turkish website for mainly academic articles on domestic, foreign policy and social issues. He is a columnist at Karar newspaper.

**Judith Vorrat** is a Senior Associate in the International Security Division of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin. She has published widely on peace and security in sub-Saharan Africa including on illicit economies in conflict-affected states as well as on approaches and instruments to end war and build peace in the UN system including UN sanctions and peacekeeping. More recently, she has been focusing on changing violence in armed conflict, in particular against civilians and ways to reduce such violence. Previously she has been a post-doc fellow at SWP, at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington D.C. and the European Union Institute for Security Studies in Paris. Judith holds a Doctor of Science from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich.

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Centre for Applied  
Turkey Studies

SWP

**Tom Waldwyn** is a Research Fellow for Defence Procurement. He conducts research on the defence industry and procurement for The Military Balance, the Military Balance+ online database, other IISS publications and projects and consultancy work. This includes writing on Turkish defence industrial-relationships with European countries, European defence industrial capabilities, Chinese submarine production and Indian fighter aircraft procurement.