

Broadening the Nongovernmental Humanitarian Mission: The IHH and Mediation

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ABSTRACT *The IHH delivers relief aid to 140 countries worldwide. Quite recently, as a novel humanitarian practice, the IHH has begun acting as a mediator in intra-state conflicts and even accumulated considerable experience in it. In the Bangsamoro peace process, for instance, the IHH was invited to play a mediator role as part of the internationally crewed Third Party Monitoring Team. Similarly, the IHH has been called upon to play mediatory roles in resolving kidnapping incidents in Syria and Pakistan, and has done so by negotiating with armed groups for the release of kidnapped and captive civilians. This paper, therefore, aims to explore the dynamics of and the motivations behind the IHH's extension of its international humanitarian mission beyond providing relief and to examine the place of such civilian mediator role in the broader humanitarian turn in Turkey's contemporary foreign policy.*

Introduction

The Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), Turkey's top nongovernmental humanitarian organization by aid volume in 2011 and 2013, and the second in 2012,¹ today delivers relief to 140 countries worldwide. The delivered aid varies from the fight against hunger to opening medical clinics, providing vocational education to women, and providing shelter and psychological support to orphans. However, quite recently, the IHH has begun channeling its operational capabilities and motives to fields beyond delivering humanitarian relief; as a novel internationalist humanitarian practice (for both Turkey and the IHH), it has begun acting as a mediator in disputes and intra-state conflicts. For instance, as a member of the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT), the IHH has played a crucial role in the peace negotiations between the Philippines government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which were initiated to end the decades-long conflict in the country. In another example, the IHH has upheld arbitration and mediation roles between warring parties and in the release of civilians imprisoned in Syria. Sim-

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these examples, the IHH does not confine itself to relief providing; moving well beyond this role, it implements mediation (or humanitarian diplomacy as the IHH calls it²) and has so far accumulated a great deal of experience. As my respondents from IHH have stated, the IHH plans to continue and expand its role in acting as a mediator in international disputes.

This paper explores the dynamics of and the motivations behind the IHH's novel civilian mediator role and its relevant practices. Concomitant to the IHH's expansion of its area of work, several other nongovernmental organizations in Turkey have begun running international humanitarian missions, and it has been suggested that Turkey is now following a proactive foreign policy, in the scope of which it has become an international humanitarian actor. This paper therefore, secondly, questions the place that the IHH's international humanitarian activities occupy in broader turn in Turkey's contemporary foreign policy. Within the scope of this examination, the paper initially discusses the roots and motives of the broader nongovernmental internationalist and humanitarian concerns in the country and the government's role in it. This debate is followed by a discussion of the IHH's broadening nongovernmental humanitarian mission through humanitarian diplomacy and mediation, which is followed by an exclusive analysis of the IHH's mediator role in the TPMT and MILF's disarmament. The research paper is based on interviews conducted with both junior and senior officials from the IHH, all of whom have been involved either in the formulation or in the conduct of the IHH's mediation practices. Their names have been omitted due to ethical concerns.

ilarly, recently, the IHH contributed to the release of two Czech women kidnapped by an al-Qaeda-linked armed group in Pakistan by officially heading the negotiations with the women's kidnappers. In a final example, the IHH is endeavoring to contribute to the solution of the Kurdish issue in the Middle East by acting as a platform to facilitate discussions. I will detail these examples and share more of them below. Needless to say, as demonstrated by

Nongovernmental Internationalism in Turkey

Nongovernmental humanitarian internationalism, a form of consciousness and a practice of overseas and cross-border civilian humanitarian engagement, is overwhelmingly characterized in Turkey by the involvement of religiously

oriented humanitarian organizations.³ The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency's (TIKA) development assistance reports also suggest this.⁴ Accordingly, setting aside the very minor contributions of a handful of secular organizations, most of Turkey's international aid to the needy in global crisis zones is provided by nongovernmental organizations with religious concerns.⁵ These relief organizations include, for instance, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), *Kimse Yok Mu*, *Dost Eli* Society of Aid and Solidarity, *Cansuyu* Society of Aid and Solidarity, *Aziz Mahmut Hüdayi* Foundation, the *Sadaka-taş* Society, the *Deniz Feneri* Association, and the *Yardımlı* International Humanitarian Aid Society. All of these organizations, in one way or another are either linked to a religious group –for example *Kimse Yok Mu* is the humanitarian aid organization of the Gülen movement– or act with a declaredly bold religious motive, such as the *Yardımlı*. To understand the IHH's involvement in 140 countries worldwide and more recently its broadening of our understanding of nongovernmental humanitarianism in Turkey, accordingly, one should first ask why Turkey's existent humanitarian organizations –including the IHH– are mostly oriented around Islam, and how this orientation is related to Turkey's so-called pro-activism in contemporary foreign policy.

The religious orientation of Turkey's humanitarian organizations may initially be explained with reference to the presence of cognitive frames among religious circles in the country, suggesting a consciousness of a global Islamic community. Faith-based organizations in Turkey existentially hold such a global consciousness, particularly of their fellow believers and their miseries worldwide. This consciousness leads them to easily translate the present internationalist frames into international engagement on a humanitarian level. This factor indeed constitutes the initial and most important spark for cross-border engagement; however, I will refrain from reducing the entire motivation of cross-border involvement to a religious cause. At this juncture, in practical terms, what accelerated international humanitarian activism and made the religiously motivated organizations the biggest nongovernmental international donors in the country were the opportunity spaces created throughout the last decade –by which religious civil society was successfully de-securitized after an almost decade-long containment– and the roles that the AK Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) governments cast for Turkey in global politics in general, and in Muslim politics in particular.

In Turkey, civil society has played a pioneering role in working towards restoring the bonds with other predominately Muslim countries/communities that had been practically broken by the Kemalist regime. Such restoration had never had implications at the governmental level until the rise to power of the Welfare Party government of the mid-1990s. The joint work of the government and civil society to restore the bonds with the global *ummah* in the early and mid-1990s, however, did not last long; the February 28 coup of 1997 ultimately



The photo shows a young boy hugging one of the volunteers of the IHH as distribute aid packages consisting of basic foodstuffs such as flour and oil to the students of Qur'anic courses in Chad.

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ORHAN ÇİÇEK

toppled the Welfare government and securitized civilian religious initiatives; hence, religious groups' ability to act, even within the country, was shattered. It was, however, the AK Party governments which de-securitized civilian religious initiatives as soon as they 'claimed the throne,' and which created opportunity spaces for civil engagement and joint actions between the state and civil society; thanks to these changes, civil society's cross-border humanitarian involvements have soared. In 2007, for instance, the AK Party government granted the following organizations tax-exempt status: *Deniz Feneri*, *Kimse Yok Mu*, the IHH, the *Aziz Mahmut Hüdayi* Foundation's Istanbul Association, and *Cansuyu*.⁶ Such exemption has provided these organizations with both governmental backing and the ability to act more proactively in the international arena; thus they are able to contribute more to the building of relations with Muslim countries and communities. By the same token, Turkey's governmental institutions, particularly TİKA, have collaborated with the aforementioned organizations and many other nongovernmental organizations in the field. For instance, TİKA collaborated with the IHH in Niger in the building of a medi-

cal clinic, and in Somalia in the building of a school for agricultural education in 2013.⁷

Moreover, in addition to the existential emphasis on *ummah* and the AK Party's practical support via opening opportunity spaces, the reconstruction of the conceptual map of the people in the country – which includes Turkey's role in global (Muslim) politics, and Turkey's so-called “civilizational” responsibilities– has provided religiously-oriented nongovernmental organizations with the cognitive and intellectual tools to direct their attention and effort to the realization of Turkey's internationalist role. Accordingly, through such political and intellectual concepts as zero-problems-with-neighbors, strategic depth, self-perception, center state, soft power, self-confident foreign policy, historical legacy, historical responsibility, humanitarian diplomacy, and civilization,⁸ the conceptual map of the people in Turkey regarding their geography, history, and present-day exigencies, and outward responsibilities has been reconstructed. Policy practices challenging the political perception of being surrounded by perpetual enemies⁹, Turkey's confidently playing of intervening role in its immediate surroundings¹⁰, and finally its opening to new geographies¹¹ via novel humanitarian instruments have all been among the factors contributing to such shifts in perception. Such developments, while turning foreign policy into a domain of epistemological reconstruction, however, have mostly appealed to religiously-motivated people and circles, and their internationalist frames of reference and applications have been stimulated within this scope.

The building of a new interpretation of geography and history via foreign policy, that also encouraged a rise in nongovernmental internationalist concern, however, required transcending certain mental barriers historically set before Turkey's foreign policy making. These barriers are in the scope of, and in tandem with, the abovementioned epistemological reconstruction of imagining Turkey's history and place on earth. The first of them was the ‘periphery state’ role that modern Turkey has been argued to have historically assumed, and which led Turkey not to intervene in the Muslim affairs globally. According to Ahmet Davutoğlu –the architect of Turkey's new imagination– this periphery state role “does not fit to the realities, historical accumulations and future projections” of the people of Turkey.¹² Turkey –as a central country and the successor of a once dominant civilization– has thus been argued to be capable of, and enjoying adequate historical accumulation to, make this successorship a part of the management of an active foreign policy, and a justification for playing a central role within world politics, with a particular emphasis on the Muslim world.



Religiously oriented organizations joined the AK Party's internationalist mission by embracing the new interpretation of geography and history built via foreign policy

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Complementarily, and as the second barrier to transcend, Kemalist Turkey had mostly ignored the miseries faced by its fellow Muslim countries and communities. Thus Turkey's new imagination required assuming a historical responsibility towards the communities and countries that are seen as part of contemporary Islamic civilization. With the help of new instruments of overseas engagement¹³ and of foreign policy institutions,¹⁴ Turkey has expanded its reach to new geographies and has become involved in the affairs of both Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Africa, South East Asia, and South America as part of this historical responsibility.¹⁵ Concomitantly, Turkey, again as part of the imagination of its historical responsibility and role as a central country, has assumed ownership of the Pal-

estine issue, acted as a mediator respectively between Israel and Syria, Bosnia and Serbia, Georgia and Russia, Iran and the West, and Afghanistan and Pakistan, and has become involved in the civilian wars in, or state building efforts of Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Syria, and Egypt. Turkey thus assumed a right –stemming from history– to be part of the solutions to the problems arising around Muslim states and communities worldwide. Turkey's taking of the presidential seat in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (ICO), for the first time in its history, coincides with such expectations and involvements. By the same token, through its tending of the Ottoman and Islamic cultural and architectural heritage throughout the Middle East, Central and South Asia, Africa and even South America, Turkey has affirmed its historical depth and helped to protect and recall the Ottoman/Islamic 'identity' of the lands in which the historical artifacts are located.¹⁶

Eventually, religiously oriented organizations joined the AK Party's internationalist mission by embracing the new interpretation of geography and history built via foreign policy. Hence, Turkey's long articulated governmental-level assertiveness and pro-activism in foreign policy have had discursive and practical manifestations in the nongovernmental sector; certain nongovernmental organizations in Turkey have thus endeavored to play influential roles in the international arena. Turkey's practical diversification of its foreign policy geographies, discourses, instruments, and motives, and its increased budget for foreign policy activities, in this regard, have been accompanied by nongovernmental organizations' radical increase of their number of overseas missions, which have contributed (either positively or negatively) to Turkey's efforts to expand its sphere of influence. Accordingly, the nongovernmental initiations were accelerated in tandem with state institutions running international humanitarian missions and ultimately, not only their human resources and fi-

nancial conditions, but also their operational experiences and capabilities have expanded. The IHH's expansion of its operational capabilities and motives to the fields beyond delivering humanitarian relief could well be read within this scope; I will return to this notion below.

In short, nongovernmental internationalism in contemporary Turkey is a practice predominately embarked upon by religiously oriented circles, and which shares certain joint motives with the government. There are at least three reasons behind this. First of all, religious circles existentially hold an international consciousness of the global community of *ummah*. Secondly, the AK Party has provided opportunity spaces for the nongovernmental sector by de-securitizing religious activism and promoting international humanitarian engagement, from which religious groups have benefitted a lot. Thirdly, the roles which the AK Party governments have cast for Turkey in global (Muslim) politics and the invocation of Turkey's civilization responsibilities have appealed to and been well received by religious circles. The IHH in this sense is no exception. As will be seen below, the IHH has embraced the civilizational frames, been supported by the government, and has exhibited a bold consciousness of a global Islamic community.

The IHH to Broaden Nongovernmental Humanitarianism

The IHH is a leading nongovernmental organization with an internationalist concern in Turkey, which has benefitted greatly from the AK Party governments' aforementioned foreign policy motivations.¹⁷ Accordingly, the cognitive frames of historical responsibility and *ummah* consciousness are solid components of the operational codes of the organization, as stated by a senior officer:

The (IHH) has a logic behind its activities which is necessary to underline. We are the descendants of an ancestry [the Ottoman Empire] that ruled and brought justice to a 21 million-m² territory; it is an ancestry that safeguarded and protected its subjects for centuries. By the end of this era and... [under] the Republican governments, we became a community that fell apart from its former citizens worldwide and [became] isolated and [mentally] trapped within the national borders... The IHH took restoring these broken bonds as one of its missions from the very beginning... we took it as a mission to go beyond the 'sacred' national borders, even beyond the Ottoman's former borders, and to [re]build bridges and network between Turkey, the entire Muslim world, and suffering people worldwide.¹⁸

The IHH has accordingly contributed to discharging the 'historical responsibility' Turkey has assumed toward Muslim communities worldwide, and envisions eventually restoring Turkey's bonds with the global *ummah* through

humanitarian means.¹⁹ In fact, it was a pure internationalist consciousness in the very beginning that generated the IHH's establishment.²⁰ The wars that erupted during the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, and the bloodshed and fatal miseries that the Yugoslavian Muslim people were exposed to thereafter provided the initial motive for the IHH's establishment.²¹ The initial steps towards its establishment were taken during the Bosnian war, yet similar humanitarian activities were undertaken during the Kosovo war and the war in Chechnya. Later in the 2000s, this time benefitting from the opportunity spaces created by the AK Party, the IHH extended its activities to several other conflict zones, a move which was followed by a diversification of the form of aid provided. The IHH has accordingly fought simultaneously against hunger and poverty; opened medical clinics and conducted cataract surgeries; built water-wells; opened schools and provided educational support to students; provided vocational education to women; built orphanages and provided shelter, furnished psychological support to orphans who lost their parents due to war or disaster; and provided food, schooling, and religious facilities to refugees and internally displaced persons²² all over the world. All these activities reflect an expansion of the content, context and character of the aid provided in the past two decades. In a senior officer's words;

The IHH can now deliver emergency aid to (both human and naturally caused) disaster zones within two hours in Turkey and within 24 hours worldwide. Haiti, Japan, Nepal and Turkey's Van (earthquakes) are recent examples of this. This has been the case for delivering aid also to large masses in war zones in Somalia, Central Africa, or Syria. Therefore, the IHH, from being a small NGO with very minor budgetary and human resource capabilities, has become an organization that, compared to similar aid organizations, far more effectively and conclusively delivers up to 450 million Turkish Liras (over 180 million USD) to 140 countries in collaboration with at least a hundred donor institutions and over 500 local implementing agencies. Its human resource has expanded. The character of aid has diversified (escalated).

As an international recognition and appreciation, due to its 'hard' work, the IHH was granted special consultative status by the UN's ECOSOC in 2004 and by the Organization of Islamic Conference's (OIC) Humanitarian Forum in 2008. The IHH has also received several international and national awards.²³ Such recognition was very imperative in the IHH's broadening of its humanitarian mission and agenda towards humanitarian diplomacy; the confidence gained through such recognition facilitated the IHH's embarking on a 'more challenging' mission of "discover[ing] and eliminate[ing] the reasons that lead people to become needy, rather than simply delivering relief to them," which the IHH calls humanitarian diplomacy.²⁴ Accordingly, in the scope of humanitarian diplomacy, which involves both mediation and advocacy, the IHH aims at "protecting human life, protecting human honor and dignity, defending hu-

man rights, eliminating the barriers to delivering aid to certain places... and human emancipation.”²⁵ In a senior respondent’s words, as a rationale, “if the protection of life is absent in a place, the food aid you deliver cannot be considered as a humanitarian mission – it is like watching someone die on a full stomach.”²⁶ Consideration for the need to take preventive humanitar-

The IHH views mediation in specific and humanitarian diplomacy in general as a domain of compulsory practices for minimizing destruction and bringing conflicting parties to accord

ian diplomatic actions in crises therefore became the new guiding principle in the IHH’s humanitarian program. The IHH, in this sense, runs four set of activities in the scope of humanitarian diplomacy. The very first of them is protecting the life and rights of people in zones of conflict and war from terrorism, state oppression, and torture. The second is preventing the deportation of asylum seekers.²⁷ The third is campaigning to find the missing; advocating for the release of civilians kidnapped, captured and imprisoned in war zones; and the task of looking after their families. The final group of activity is mediation, a ‘sacred’ duty imposed by the holy Qur’an, as a senior respondent defined it. My respondent asserted accordingly that “in the *Surah al-Hujurat* [49:9] it is stated that ‘if two groups of Muslims fight against each other, reconcile them’ this shows the obligation for a third party to take [the matter] in charge.”²⁸ Therefore, the IHH views mediation in specific and humanitarian diplomacy in general as a domain of compulsory practices for minimizing destruction and bringing conflicting parties to accord, without which its humanitarian aid efforts would eventually become dysfunctional and inconclusive.²⁹

In the early steps of going beyond aid delivery and of embarking on humanitarian diplomacy practices, the IHH ran an initiative to break Israel’s blockage in Gaza, especially after Gaza’s being turned into the world’s biggest ‘prison camp’³⁰ after Israel’s besieging of the city from the air, land and sea following its military offensive in late 2008 and early 2009. Accordingly, in May 2010 six international nongovernmental organizations,³¹ including the IHH, established an aid flotilla (the Freedom Flotilla) to carry donated aid supplies to Gaza and thus to end the siege. There were more than 700 peace activists –including parliamentary deputies, international press members, and winners of the Nobel Peace Prize– from 37 countries onboard, when the Israeli armed forces raided the Mavi Marmara, the flagship of the flotilla, in international waters, which resulted in the death of ten civilians, and in the injury of 56 others.³²

The incident was ground-breaking for the IHH, as the campaign to support Gaza directly challenged a government policy and aimed at raising global awareness about Israel’s policies and the humanitarian destruction in the

IHH, a Turkish NGO nominated by MILF as one of the five NGOs of the Third Party Monitoring Team in the Bangsamoro peace process, has played a significant mediatory role.

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region. Despite the controversy cast on the flotilla event, particularly by the international media, the IHH interpreted the effort as a successful campaign by making Israel’s “cruelty” heard globally.³³ This incident also influenced Turkey’s foreign policy, as it set the relationship between Turkey and Israel at odds, eventually making Turkey a confident third party in the Middle East, one that declared ownership over the Palestinian issue. The incident, moreover, made the IHH a *trustworthy* and *price-paying* third party within the Muslim world, a factor which was often addressed by my respondents as a rationale for their being seen as a trustworthy and reliable mediator.

Building on this humanitarian diplomacy experience and ensuing trust, the IHH embarked on several other mediatory practices. For instance, again in Palestine, Fatah and Hamas were brought together with an aim to bring an end to the tensions between the two parties, which was anticipated to help reverse the radicalization and marginalization of the Palestinian side.³⁴ So far, the negotiations have not been conclusive, yet, to my respondent, “the parties’ asking of the IHH to take a role was alone promising... and shows that the IHH has become a trustworthy actor in the Palestinian case.”³⁵ Similar bids were made for bringing together the conflicting Muslim groups in Chechnya, the Sufis and Salafists, who were close to declaring each other unbelievers and were thus combating. This initiation has also been inconclusive.³⁶

In another example, the IHH upheld arbitration and mediation roles in crisis zones in Syria between warring parties and for the release of imprisoned and

tortured civilians since the beginning of the civil war in the country in 2012. The very first successful mediation practice in Syria was in May 2012, seen in the release of two Turkish citizen journalists (Adem Özköse and Hamit Coşkun) detained by the Syrian intelligence service. The captives were released as a result of the IHH's negotiations with all parties in Syria, in collaboration with the Syrian opposition, and the Turkish and Iranian governments.³⁷ This endeavor was followed by the successful petitioning of the Syrian opposition groups for the release of 70 Iranian citizens in 2012 and 2013.³⁸ Similar negotiations were undertaken with the Syrian regime, resulting in the release of 2,137 Syrian citizens and six Western reporters in 2013.³⁹ The IHH's involvements of this kind in Syria may be seen in tandem with its campaigns for protecting human life and dignity. In the words of my informant:



Between the warring parties within Syria (and equally in Iraq), the IHH mediated to prevent the conflict from turning into a 'sectarian war'

what really matters is the protection of human life and dignity... regardless of one's religion, either Muslim or non-Muslim, the religious law clearly defines how we treat captives; you will feed them with whatever you eat, you will cloth them with whatever you wear. However, today, we see that in a single prison in Syria 11,000 people were tortured to death. Recently, around 54,000 photos taken from such a prison were went viral and we believe there are many other similar prisons in Syria... While these [atrocities] are happening, we barely see that governments take initiative for the emancipation of the civilian captives... We, at this juncture, in order to minimize the casualties and in the name of the people's endeavor to defend and protect themselves, undertake humanitarian diplomacy practices.⁴⁰

On the same basis, yet this time between the warring parties within Syria (and equally in Iraq), the IHH mediated to prevent the conflict from turning into a 'sectarian war'. A senior respondent narrated such mediation work as follows:

In every opportunity people talk about the *ummah* but take no serious step to prevent a potential crisis within the *ummah*... As a civilian initiative, we decided to do our part. Hence, via collaborating with civilians, we endeavored to help politicians in facilitating their taking of effective measures. Via bringing the *ulema*, NGOs, and opinion leaders together and working collaboratively with them, we strived to prevent people from killing each other in the name of Shiism or Sunnism in Syria. After [several] meetings and reaching consensuses on certain issues, because of the militaries and their declaration of commitment to winning the 'war' at the expense of sacrificing millions of lives, all our efforts have [several times] come to nothing. This is what has been happening in Syria.⁴¹

Several other initiations were carried out by the IHH, advocating with ISIL for the release of the captives, who were later brutally murdered. As my respondent narrated,

We had official applications from family members or state-officials asking for our involvement in saving the Americans and Europeans kidnapped and later killed by DAESH in Syria... We tried to reach DAESH, but unfortunately failed to do so, because DAESH never agreed to sit down at the negotiation table... You cannot start a negotiation process with DAESH; they neither follow the Islamic principle here nor the local culture or modern values. They made killing the delegates peacefully coming to talk to them a common practice... They have several times murdered Syrian revolutionaries during negotiation meetings.”⁴²

Nevertheless, despite the problems on the ground, the IHH continues “its attempts for the release of all civilians, including women, children and journalists, held captive in Syria.”⁴³ As I was told, there have been tens of appeals made to them from all over the world for negotiating with the groups, particularly in Syria, for the release of both civilian and former-fighter captives.

Similar efforts of humanitarian diplomacy have been undertaken in other countries. Recently in Egypt, right after the military coup, the IHH, as expressed by a respondent, initiated mediation between the Muslim Brotherhood and the coup-committers and

came up with ten themes, the resolution of which would have ended the coup and resulted in a civilian rule being founded.⁴⁴ “The negotiations,” as my informant stated, “were positively developed with the cooperative involvement of the Sisi’s representatives; however, the

process was obstructed by a sudden change in [their] attitudes after weeks of negotiation. If the negotiations had been carried on, an era of quiescence would have started in which all parties were reimbursed.”⁴⁵ I indeed could not access any external source to confirm this; yet, such involvement well represents the extent to which the IHH’s confidence in mediating has increased.

In another example, in Pakistan, the IHH was invited to initiate negotiations between the Taliban and the Pakistani state to bring an end to the conflict in the country. “Via the association we found in Pakistan,” stated a senior official, “we carried out mediation activities with the participation of representatives from both the Taliban and the Pakistani state and achieved an understanding on certain issues; however, the Taliban killed... its [own] negotiators who had

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become convinced of the necessity of peace and thus were committed to continuing negotiations.” “Today”, continued my respondent, “we are back where we started” in the mediation process between the Taliban and Pakistan and “have seen who works for the sake of crisis and who for peace.”⁴⁶ In another recent mediatory involvement in Pakistan, the IHH contributed to the release of two Czech women (Antonie Chrastecka and Hana Humpalova) who had been kidnapped and held captive for two years by an al-Qaeda-linked armed group in Pakistan, through officially leading the negotiations with the women’s kidnappers.⁴⁷ The hostages appeared in several videos and had been used by the kidnappers for bargaining. The IHH became involved in the mediation work after receiving an appeal from the families of the hostages. “The kidnappers agreed on releasing the hostages,” stated my senior official respondent, “with the assistance of local contacts and due to the trust the parties have in the IHH.”⁴⁸

Before moving on to an in-depth and exemplifying analysis of the IHH’s involvement in the Bangsamoro peace process as a mediator, I will give a final example of humanitarian diplomacy. The IHH endeavors to contribute to the successfully resolution of the Kurdish issue and thus has long supported the peace process in Turkey. The IHH, as stated by a respondent, “has taken initiatives to get rid of this crisis that caused the death of thousands... [and that] has day by day shaken the very foundations of our brotherhood.”⁴⁹ One of the initiatives in this cause is the Resolution Process Report, published by the IHH and based on a comprehensive public opinion survey conducted in the Kurdish regions. In a senior respondents words, the “report was prepared and published when no-one talked about a peace process in Turkey... and we may even say that the report shed some light for the official Peace Process that was started later on.”⁵⁰ The IHH’s President, Bülent Yıldırım, stated in the press briefing about the release of the report that, “we have taken a humanitarian diplomacy initiative here based on our earlier experiences as mediator, and prepared this Kurdish Problem report through taking the Kurds’ opinion in Iraq, Iran, and even Azerbaijan [in addition to Turkey].”⁵¹ In the report, the IHH supported the reinstatement of the Kurds’ long prohibited cultural rights [the ones Kurds acquired with birth]. Thus, for instance, the proscriptions against the use of Kurdish in education or the political realm must be removed. The report, moreover, suggests that the public use of Kurdish should be legitimized, that citizenship should be redefined, that nationalist practices such as the recitation of Our Pledge in schools should be removed, that unconditional amnesty should be guaranteed for PKK militants who were never involved in violent attacks, that the already started civilian dialogs should be uninterruptedly continued, and finally that both parties should stay at the negotiation table at all cost and should never take up arms.⁵² In addition to this report, the IHH held evaluation workshops and meetings with the participation of national and international public figures and organized symposiums, such as

the one recently (25-26 April 2015) held in Diyarbakır [Kurds and Peace in the Middle East]. The symposium brought together nationally and internationally known academic and media figures and local and national wing leaders to discuss the peace process, regional developments, and the do's and don'ts for achieving peace.⁵³ With this symposium, the IHH aimed at promoting and contributing to an environment of peace by underlining the necessity of securing human life through the removal of injustices and political oppression [generated by both the Turkish state and the PKK] over the Kurdish people that would positively affect the peoples of the entire Middle East region. It moreover aimed at strengthening dialogue and mutual understanding, due to the absence of which “violence has become the only language the parties of the conflict have utilized... [thus] the problem has diffused to the community level and deepened inter-communal distancing.”⁵⁴ By bringing people together and allowing them to talk about their own problems, the IHH has strived to make the language of peace prevail.

Beyond Humanitarian Diplomacy: the IHH as a Peace Mediator

The above examples show that what the IHH possesses is a broader understanding of humanitarian diplomacy, which goes occasionally beyond initiating a protection from threat to life for people-in-need towards mediating between conflicting parties to reach a conclusive peace. To better exemplify this, here, I provide an exclusive analysis of the IHH's peace mediator role as part of the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT) in the Bangsamoro peace process and thus in the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)'s disarmament. Doing so will better illustrate the dynamics, processes and mechanisms of the IHH's civilian mediatory role and show how far its humanitarian diplomacy has reached.

The Philippines gained its independence in 1946, yet, as was similarly seen in almost all post-colonial experiences, decolonization did not simply bring a smooth transition to peace in the country. Up until today, the country has experienced several armed conflict from within, thus several rebel groups and separatist movements with differing reasons (ideological, ethnic, or religious) have revolted against the government. In Mindanao, a group of islands in the southern Philippines historically populated and ruled by Muslims (or the Moro people, as they are commonly termed); uprisings began as early as the late 1940s when the government, right after its independence, embarked on massive resettlements, as a result of which the population makeup of the island has radically changed. By the 1980s, 80 percent of the population of the island was Christian, while Muslims had become a minority group. This shift in the ratio of the population and the ensuing fierce oppressions the Muslim people faced –which caused the killing of thousands of civilian Muslims as occurred in 1974 in Jolo, as well as the divestment from basic human needs

such as food, security, health, education, electricity, water sanitation or communication— generated a deep resentment which resulted in political and armed opposition to the government. The initial opposition came from the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) with demands for greater autonomy for the Moro people in the island in late 1960s. After two decades of conflict, the government, in 1990, agreed on the establishment of autonomous provinces, which led to the signing of a peace agreement between MNLF and the Philippines government in 1996. However, the conflicts continued in the country until 2009 when a promising ceasefire agreement was signed with the government. This time it was the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a splinter group from MNLF but now the largest Muslim rebel organization with an estimated 11,000 members, as the signatory on behalf of the Muslim people in the country. Although occasional armed conflicts continued in the country between the aforementioned parties, in October 2012 the government and the MILF signed a framework peace plan after the mediation work carried out by Malaysia starting in 2010 to successfully end the civil war which had caused the death of more than 100,000 people (for the most part Muslims) in Mindanao, and the exile of 2 million others.

Being a member of an international peace mandate has opened new horizons for the IHH in their future projections of involvement in intra-state and international conflicts

The Framework Peace Plan, which led to the signing of the Framework Agreement on Bangsamoro (FAB) –the final agreement is the Comprehensive Agreement to be signed in 2016– on March 2014 and to the drafting of the Bangsamoro Basic Law securing the establishment of an autonomous Bangsamoro,⁵⁵ suggested the establishment of a Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT)⁵⁶ consisting of national and international observers nominated by the Philippines government and the MILF to review, assess, evaluate and monitor the progress in the peace process and the implementation of all signed agreements and mutually-agreed commitments.⁵⁷ After a series of talks, finally in 2013 the Terms of Reference for the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT) were signed and the TPMT started its mandate. In line with what the FAB suggested on the formation of the TPMT –composed of a chair, two representatives of local and two of international NGOs, one of each being nominated by each party– the following institutions became the members: the Mindanao Human Rights Action Centre (a local NGO nominated by the MILF), the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation (nominated by the MILF), the Asia Foundation (nominated by the government), and the Ortigas Peace Institute (a local NGO nominated by the government). The mandate is chaired by Alistair MacDonald, former EU Ambassador to the Philippines.



A photo taken from the “Kurdish and Peace in the Middle East International Symposium” organized from IHH in Diyarbakir on April 15, 2015.

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HASAN NAMLI

The IHH’s inclusion in the resolution of the conflict in the Philippines, as reported by my respondents, did not begin with the recent internationally recognized mediator role the organization was given. However, being a member of an international peace mandate has opened new horizons for the IHH in their future projections of involvement in intra-state and international conflicts. The IHH’s membership in the TPMT resulted from their nomination by the MILF as the international NGO member, which was not smoothly accepted by the Philippines government. However, the MILF insisted on the IHH’s membership as a mediator to the TPMT. The reason for the MILF’s insistence, according to a senior official from the IHH, was that the “IHH had a history of close relations with the Moro Muslims, provided humanitarian relief whenever needed... and because the MILF knew that the IHH would support the best interests of the Muslims in the country.”⁵⁸ Accordingly, as I was told, “the chairman of the MILF, Al Haj Murad Ebrahim responded to the question of ‘why MILF particularly wanted the IHH to be a mediator, which was raised to him by IHH officials, by stating that the IHH serves the entire *ummah*, you need such a responsibility... besides there is no other organization within the Islamic world capable of holding this responsibility.”⁵⁹

Accordingly, being a member of such a mandate, as I was told, was important first of all, because the IHH shares Murad Ebrahim’s view on the scarcity of capable NGOs in the Muslim world to do mediation. Since the IHH has the capacity to do it, it was a responsibility without choice. Yet, more than that, the TPMT was thought to be a powerful means to facilitate the establishment

of peace in the Philippines; so the IHH felt that via being a part of the mandate, it could contribute more efficiently to the resolution of the decades-long conflict in the country. The TPMT has the power to report to the world who the responsible party is, if a failure is experienced in the peace process. The TPMT accordingly assesses the performances of all parties within the peace process, including the state, the MILF, and even the Independent *Decommissioning Body (IDB)*, an international committee founded in line with the FAB and in charge of overseeing the disarmament process, which is headed by Turkey.

The IHH's taking of a role within the TPMT was also consistent with the IHH's historical position as a humanitarian actor in Moro

To my respondents, the IHH's taking of a role within the TPMT was also consistent with the IHH's historical position as a humanitarian actor in Moro. The IHH's works in Moro date back to 1996, and started with *qurbani* and Ramadan aids. However, after 9/11 and due to the sanctions the NGOs from the Gulf region experienced, only a handful of Muslim NGOs continued their campaigns in the Philippines and the IHH was one of them.⁶⁰ During this period, as an informant stated, "Moro Muslims faced a severe lack of humanitarian relief, while the IHH tried so hard to be a remedy to [their] friends in Moro."⁶¹ However, from the very beginning, more than providing relief assistance, as elaborated by the same respondent, "the IHH supported the peace efforts, initially through prompting and encouraging, and later through involvement in the process... [Within the scope of the initial phase] we had several view exchanges on the issue, visited Murad Ebrahim several times, and encouraged the MILF to stay at the negotiation table throughout. This was the case also when Malaysia initiated peace talks in 2010 onward."⁶²

The TPMT, and thus the IHH as a member in it, has so far spent most of its efforts in listening to the key stakeholders on the issue, specifically in hearing their thoughts and expectations for the way ahead and for how the TPMT could best fulfill its mandate.⁶³ The TPMT, moreover, prepared yearly reports⁶⁴ that review and assess the challenges and promises of the process. The TPMT's task will continue until the Exit Agreement is signed, which will take place after the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement and its full implementation by the parties. So far, several steps have been taken on the roadmap towards the creation of Bangsamoro, yet occasional diversions have broken out due to clashes between the government and the MILF, which has mutually damaged the trust. Nevertheless, the peace track is still being followed and other steps in the roadmap continue to be taken. At this juncture, the most emblematic of these steps has been the ceremonial turnover of crew-served weapons and high-powered firearms by the MILF in June 2015 to the Independent De-

Turkey's governmental backing does not mean that the IHH and the government collaborate; it rather shows that they share a sense of internationalist pro-activism and responsibility

commissioning Body,⁶⁵ a mandate chaired by a Turkish diplomat, Haydar Berk. Accordingly, the MILF turned over 55 high-powered and 20 crew-serve weapons and 145 of its fighters were decommissioned.⁶⁶ This showed, according to a senior respondent from the IHH, that “the MILF showed its will to lay down arms.”⁶⁷ Following this symbolic act, in three phases, which will depend on the Philippines government's performance on and commitment to the peace process, the MILF will lay down all its forces, which will come also to mean the functional establishment of Bangsamoro.

In the meantime, Turkey seems to have a prominent place in the actualization of the peace process in the Philippines as well. Before chairing the IDB, Turkey was part of the International Contact Group⁶⁸ that had a facilitative role in the peace talks initiated by Malaysia in 2010. However, although admitting that Turkey's presence as a party to the peace process in the Philippines is imperative and promising, the IHH was not happy with Turkey's performance, particularly during its role as a facilitator. This is because, as I was told, “Turkey did not assign a diplomat to follow the negotiations between 2010 and 2012 and rarely attended to the negotiations, while Japan and the UK never missed a meeting.”⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Ebrahim's following statement suggests that Turkey was influential and that the Turkish government and the IHH's roles were perceived as complementary by the MILF,⁷⁰ confirming what I have argued previously regarding the IHH's sharing of Turkey's pro-activism:

Turkey was very much helpful in the building of the peace process... I talked to Ahmet Davutoğlu three times by phone. He gave great support. Whenever a difficulty appeared, he immediately stepped into the process. The Turkish Ambassador [to the Philippines] joined us at the signature ceremony. Turkey [the Turkish government] runs the political side of the [mediation] process, while the IHH runs the humanitarian.

Despite occasional unrealized expectations, the mediation practice in the Philippines has been very much instructive for the IHH, as it is the IHH's first internationally supported and recognized large-scale peace mediation. “It has been a great experience sitting around the negotiation table in charge of monitoring a peace process,” stated another senior respondent from the IHH, “we have seen within the TPMT the international environment in which the peace processes is cooked, seen the state and non-state bodies' reflexes, seen the obstructions and deadlocks and how to deal with them... [To us it] has been such a great experience to work with other international organizations in

mediation. We have now achieved a great deal of confidence in this.”⁷¹ This experience is alone a gain for the IHH, yet the organization intends to make use of this experience in contributing to the solutions of several other intra-state conflicts within the Muslim world and beyond. Accordingly, the same respondent argued that:

if the Bangsamoro peace process could be successfully completed, as there are still issues to be resolved and it is so far an ongoing process, the IHH’s experience in Moro will enable the IHH to be involved in [resolving] problems similar to Moro in the region; such as Arakan in Myanmar, East Turkistan in China or Pattani in Thailand. We were invited to be part of the negotiations in Philippines, but for the mentioned crises and with the confidence of Moro [behind us], the IHH will be the one inviting the parties to negotiate the resolution of the conflicts and to initiate a peace process.⁷²

Conclusion

The long articulated pro-activism in Turkey’s contemporary foreign policy is discursively and practically shared by nongovernmental organizations in the country that endeavor to play constructive roles in the international arena. The IHH stands as a concrete example of this and it has shared, benefitted from and ‘contributed’ to the discharging of Turkey’s assumed historical and civilizational responsibility and role in global Muslim politics. It’s broadening of our understanding of a nongovernmental humanitarian mission through mediation and humanitarian diplomacy has complemented Turkey’s assumed role in global politics. As can be seen in the examples above, the IHH follows conceptual categories created during the broader turn in Turkey’s foreign policy (such as historical responsibility, and humanitarian diplomacy or mediation). Moreover, as I mentioned in the examples of Mavi Marmara, civilian captives in Syria, and the Bangsamoro peace process, the IHH’s mediation and humanitarian diplomacy activities are backed and accompanied by Turkey. Turkey’s governmental backing was present also in other initiations, yet this does not mean that the IHH and the government collaborate; it rather shows that they share a sense of internationalist pro-activism and responsibility. Therefore, despite the IHH’s possession of a consciousness of the global Islamic community and its ability to translate this consciousness into international humanitarian practices, it was the AK Party’s recalling of the country’s so-called ‘civilizational responsibilities’ and the opportunity spaces it provided that catalyzed and fueled the IHH’s internationalist pro-activism, as was the case in other nongovernmental humanitarian organizations’ international humanitarian openings. Therefore, although my informants from the IHH denied that they are following the AK Party’s contemporary foreign policy, the traces of this new understanding in foreign policy making are apparent in

the IHH's aid delivery, conduct of humanitarian diplomacy, and assumption of the role of mediator. These traces well demonstrate the place of the IHH's humanitarian internationalism within the broader turn in Turkey's contemporary foreign policy.

The second and the core enquiry of this paper involves the dynamics of and the motivations behind the IHH's extension of its international humanitarian mission beyond relief providing and towards humanitarian diplomacy and mediation. It is argued in the paper that the IHH's broadening humanitarian internationalism towards humanitarian diplomacy and mediation was initially motivated by consideration of the need for taking preventive humanitarian diplomatic actions in crises, without which humanitarian aid efforts eventually become dysfunctional and inconclusive. This was the practical reason. There was also a religious ground, concomitant to the *ummah* focus of the organization, making mediation a sacred duty by suggesting that when two groups of Muslims fight against each other, mediation for the third parties becomes a compulsory practice. In the IHH's implementation, based on these two grounds, the mediation occurred in the following forms: bringing conflicting Muslim groups together to settle their disputes, negotiating with armed groups and state bodies for the release of imprisoned or kidnapped civilians, initiating dialog for preventing sectarian wars within the Muslim world, acting as a platform for the solving of ethno-political disputes, and finally mediating between state and non-state conflicting parties to reach a conclusive peace.

Nevertheless, the IHH's embarking on mediation was made possible by several other dynamics. Accordingly, the international recognition the IHH has received due to its success in delivering aid has provided the IHH with a solid basis for adding humanitarian diplomacy and mediation to its humanitarian agenda. Moreover and in a similar degree, for the IHH to act as a mediator in disputes required the building of *trust* on the part of the actors involved, as well as within the international arena, in the IHH's ability to problem-solve and in its commitment to the humanitarian cause. The Mavi Marmara initiation facilitated the reification of this trust to a certain degree. This is because the 'sacrifice' the IHH gave (the death of 10 civilians during the raid), together with the IHH's position as a constant relief provider and defender of the Muslim/humanitarian cause, which made the IHH a *trustworthy* and *price-paying* third party ready to take on a role in solving disputes, particularly within the Muslim world. The IHH's ensuing humanitarian diplomacy and mediation activities in Syria, Pakistan and Palestine affirmed such a role and trust, and finally led the IHH to take a role as a mediator in an intra-state crisis in the Philippines. The IHH's experience as a mediator in the Bangsamoro peace process has both further motivated the IHH to assume imperative roles within the Muslim world and beyond, and once more affirmed Turkey's and the IHH's joint humanitarian concerns and involvements in the Muslim world. ■

Endnotes

1. "TİKA Turkish Development Assistance Report," (2013), retrieved from http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/publication/KYR_FRAE_2013_uyg9.pdf.
"TİKA Turkish Development Assistance Report," (2012), retrieved from <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/oldpublication/TurkishDevelopmentAssistance2012.pdf>.
"TİKA Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu," (2011), retrieved from <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/oldpublication/KalkınmaYardımlarıRaporu2011.pdf>.
2. Humanitarian diplomacy does not have a standardized use or clarity in the way the IHH understands and articulates it. It is most frequently used to address all of the IHH's activities other than humanitarian relief; i.e. mediation, advocacy, or both simultaneously. This complicated use of the term humanitarian diplomacy by the organization might have caused some controversies in the way the paper categorized/reported the events, meaning that, some examples given under the category of humanitarian diplomacy or mediation might actually be an advocacy work.
3. For an introductory discussion on this see Husrev Tabak, "Nongovernmental Humanitarianism in Turkey: The Quest for Internationalist Virtue," *Daily Sabah*, (November 20, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/2014/11/20/nongovernmental-humanitarianism-in-turkey-the-quest-for-internationalist-virtue>.
4. See "TİKA Turkish Development Assistance Report," (2013), p. 78; "TİKA Turkish Development Assistance Report," (2012), p. 78; "TİKA Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu," (2011), p. 71. These reports are accessible online at the URL links provided above, in note 2.
5. This is also partly confirmed by a recent study by Aras and Akpınar through stating that religion and culture play a catalytic role in Turkey's nongovernmental humanitarian organizations' cross-border operations. See Bülent Aras and Pinar Akpınar, "The Role of Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey's Peacebuilding," *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (2015), pp. 234, 239. Such a characterization of these organizations, however, has not been addressed by Keyman and Sazak in their work despite the fact that all of the NGOs to which they refer in their study are declaredly religiously motivated ones. See Fuat Keyman and Onur Sazak, "Turkey as a 'Humanitarian State,'" *POMEAS Policy Paper*, No. 2 (2014), p. 10-11. This however should not imply that I am reducing the entire motivation of humanitarian NGOs to religion here. What I am suggesting is that Islam existentially provides religious circles with cognitive frames and a consciousness of the presence of a global religious community, which entails the necessity of standing shoulder to shoulder with them when needed. It is this frame that has facilitated the religiously motivated peoples' engagement in cross-border humanitarian missions.
6. <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=219537>.
7. "TİKA Faaliyet Raporu," (2013), retrieved from <http://www.TİKA.gov.tr/upload/oldpublication/faaliyet-raporu-2013.pdf>, pp. 154, 165.
8. For a complete list of the entries of the conceptual map of Turkey's AK Party era foreign policy see Murat Yeşiltaş and Ali Balcı, "AK Parti Dönemi Türk Dış Politikası Sözlüğü: Kavramsal Bir Harita," *Bilgi*, Vol. 23 (Winter 2011), pp. 9-34.
9. Seen as building relations with Armenia or cancelling visa with Syria, Georgia or Russia, which had taken place in the scope of Turkey's 'zero problem with neighbors' approach.
10. Seen as acting as a mediator between Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina or being an interfering party in the Syrian civil war.
11. Such as Africa and South America.
12. Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2001), p. 91.
13. Such as soft power or humanitarian diplomacy.
14. Such as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, the Yunus Emre Institute, the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), the Red Crescent, and even the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet).
15. İbrahim Kalın, "Soft Power and Public Diplomacy in Turkey," *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2011), pp. 5-24.

16. Fırat Purtaş, "Türk Dış Politikasının Yükselen Değeri: Kültürel Diplomasi," *Akademik Bakış*, Vol. 7, No. 13 (2013), pp. 1-14.

17. It is argued by a respondent that it is the IHH that is guiding Turkey's opening to new geographies through bringing up or introducing the miseries of the 'unknown' Muslim communities worldwide to Turkey (Pers. Comm. 27 Aug 2015). Here, I argue that the IHH, similar to other religiously motivated civilian organizations in the country, joined the AK Party's 'civilizational' mission, not the other way around. However, it could also be argued that their concern was co-constitutive, developed in due course of time with reference to each other's continuing involvement abroad. Therefore, it should not be understood that the IHH or other nongovernmental organizations with cross-border missions in Turkey act in harmony with the government nor that these organizations and the government follow a joint program. The concomitancy in approach has manifested itself and been developed mostly as common references to the historical responsibility the people of Turkey have borne in justifying their engagement with the needy abroad. As a matter of fact, the government has supported and been happy to see the nongovernmental organizations' overseas engagement; as they have become complementary to Turkey's governmental level opening to new regions. This paper therefore does not intend to argue that the mentioned civilian organizations' 'non-governmental' character is at stake, it definitely is not.

18. Pers. Comm. 27 Aug 2015.

19. The IHH is fully dedicated to such a mission and thus is even uncomfortable with Turkey's recent inability to play a determining role in the affairs of Muslim communities in Syria and elsewhere. The IHH sees that the Turkey's lack of success at the level of foreign policy harms the organization's acceleration and capacity to get results in the ground (Pers. Comm. 27 Aug 2015).

20. The organization was officially founded in 1995, despite the fact that the founding fathers began initiating humanitarian work as early as 1992.

21. <http://www.ihh.org.tr/en/main/pages/tarihce/338>.

22. Details of these assistances could be found in the IHH's official quarterly newsletter, *İnsani Yardım* journal accessible online at <http://ihhkitap.org/>. Also see the IHH's Report on the Worlds Orphans, 2014, Prepared by Zehra Kavak, Accessible online at http://www.ihh.org.tr/fotograf/yayinlar/dokumanlar/DUNYADA_YETIM_GERCEGI_2014_ENG_WEB.pdf and IHH 2012 Orphan Care Efforts Activity Report. Accessible online at <http://www.ihh.org.tr/uploads/2013/yetim-faaliyet-raporu-2012-en.pdf>.

23. See the following link for a complete list of awards the IHH has received. <http://www.ihh.org.tr/en/main/pages/hakkimizda/114>.

24. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

25. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

26. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

27. In collaboration with the International Refugee Rights Association, an NGO founded with the support of the IHH. See <http://multecihaklari.org.tr/>

28. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

29. Ayşe Aktaş, "İnsani Diplomasi Kavramına Genel Bir Giriş Denemesi (III)," *IHH*, retrieved from <http://www.ihhakademi.com/insani-diplomasi-kavramina-genel-bir-giris-denemesi-iii/>.

30. As also described by David Cameron in 2010. See <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/jul/27/david-cameron-gaza-prison-camp>.

31. These organizations are the IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, the Free Gaza Movement, the European Campaign to End the Siege on Gaza, Ship to Gaza Greece, Ship to Gaza Sweden, and The International Committee to Lift the Siege on Gaza.

32. Detailed information regarding the Mavi Marmara incident can be obtained from the following official websites of the case <http://whatismavimarmara.com>, <http://aboutmavimarmara.com>, <http://www.freedomflotillafacts.com>, and <http://mavi-marmara.ihh.org.tr/en>.

33. However, as convincingly argued by Bayram, Israel's counter propaganda was overwhelmingly successful in defining what the flotilla represented and what happened during the raid. See Salih Bayram,

"Whose Story Won? Public Diplomacy and International News Coverage of the 2010 Gaza Flotilla/Mavi Marmara," *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Vol. 12, No. 45 (2015).

34. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

35. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

36. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

37. Press release, IHH, May 13, 2012, <http://www.ihh.org.tr/tr/main/news/0/ihhdan-adem-ozkose-ve-hamit-coskun-aciklamasi/538>.

38. IHH Field Report, "Syrian Crisis in its Third Year," (2013), retrieved from <http://www.ihh.org.tr/TR/main/video/ihh-syria-report/243>. Also see <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2013/01/09/tarihi-takasin-ilk-goruntuleri.html>.

39. This is the highest number of civilian captives released since World War II, as argued by a respondent (Pers. Comm., 27 August 2015). Also see IHH Field Report, "Syrian Crisis in its Third Year," 2013, p. 22-23.

40. Pers. Comm., 27 August 2015. In fact, as I was told by all my respondents, it was initially the 'successful and sincere' humanitarian activities the IHH initiated in the country that enabled the IHH to gain the trust of all parties, and thus to act as a trustworthy third-party actor in the country. Details of the IHH's activities in Syria can be found at Zümrüt Sönmez, "A Life on the Edge: Syrian IDPs," *Caucasus International*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2015).

41. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

42. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

43. <http://www.ihh.org.tr/en/main/pages/suriye-insani-diplomasi/314>.

44. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015. My respondent declined to share the details of the themes with me during the interview, saying that 'sharing the details of negotiations built on trust to the mediator would be inappropriate'.

45. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

46. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

47. See <http://sputniknews.com/europe/20150328/1020137488.html> for the news coverage of the event.

48. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

49. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

50. Pers. Comm. 27 August 2015.

51. See press release <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2013/09/15/ihh-kurt-sorunu-raporunu-acikladi.html>.

52. <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2013/09/15/ihh-kurt-sorunu-raporunu-acikladi.html>.

53. See the post-conference release <http://www.ihhakademi.com/ortadoguda-kurtler-ve-baris-sempozyumu-diyarbakirda-gerceklestirildi/>.

54. See the press release of the conference <http://www.ihhakademi.com/ortadoguda-kurtler-ve-baris-konusuyoruz/>.

55. <http://opapp.gov.ph/ct/bangsamoro-basic-law>.

56. See the following link for the Terms of Reference for the Third Party Monitoring Team (TPMT) http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/PH_130125_TORThirdPartyMonitoringTeam.pdf. Also see <http://www.ihh.org.tr/en/main/news/0/independent-third-party-monitoring-team-visit/1894>.

57. See the following link for the details of the functions of the TPMT: http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/PH_130125_TORThirdPartyMonitoringTeam.pdf.

58. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.

59. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.

60. "IHH Report on Moro," *Moro Özerklik Arefesinde*, (May 2014), retrieved from <http://www.ihh.org.tr/fotograf/yayinlar/dokumanlar/215-moro-ozerklik-arifesinde-dokuman.pdf>.
61. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.
62. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.
63. <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/milf/features/third-party-monitoring-team-visits-manila-and-cotabato>.
64. <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/features/third-party-monitoring-team-first-public-report-july-2013-january-2014>.
<http://www.opapp.gov.ph/sites/default/files/tpmt-2nd-public-report.pdf>.
65. <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/milf/news/third-party-monitoring-team-issues-its-second-annual-public-report-highlights-considerable>.
66. See Murad Ebrahim's talk during the ceremony <http://www.opapp.gov.ph/features/speech-mr-murad-ebrahim-during-ceremonial-turnover-weapons-and-decommissioning-milf>.
67. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.
68. Along with Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Japan, the UK, Humanitarian Dialogue, the Muhammadiyya group of Indonesia, and Crisis Action were the members of the International Contact Group. For some insights on Turkey's mediation activities, see Bülent Aras, "Turkey's Mediation and Friends of Mediation Initiative," *SAM Papers*, No. 4 (2012), p. 3 and Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Mediation: Critical Reflections from the Field," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (2013), pp. 83-90.
69. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.
70. See <http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2012/10/26/moro-dan-turkiye-ve-ihh-ya-ozel-tesekkur.html> and <http://www.ihh.org.tr/en/main/news/0/moro-leader-al-haj-murad-ebrahim-was-in-ihh/1560>.
71. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.
72. Pers. Comm. 13 August 2015.