



# Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Turkey and Women in Diplomacy: How to Integrate the WPS Agenda in Turkish Foreign Policy

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As of 2020 which marks the 20th anniversary of Resolution 1325, Turkey is not among the 86 UN Member States which have adopted a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement the Resolution. The absence of an NAP overshadows the Turkish government's stated policy of pursuing 'a proactive approach towards the UN striving to contribute effectively to all major issues on the UN Agenda'.<sup>i</sup>

To the best of our knowledge, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has decided to take ownership of the issue and held a national coordination meeting in June 2016.<sup>ii</sup> However, the failed coup attempt in July 2016 reshuffled the priorities, putting the NAP on the back burner. Gleaned from the interviews for this project, we understand that the MFA is now ready to start a new initiative among relevant ministries for the preparation of an NAP.

Not surprisingly, among the burning questions of Turkish foreign policy, it is proving difficult to attach priority to the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. Yet, a different look at the content of the Resolution reveals the benefits of the WPS agenda in Turkish foreign policy, as the ways this agenda touches issues such as refugees and asylum, foreign aid, and peacekeeping would suggest the importance of an NAP for Turkey. The militarisation trend in Turkish foreign policy, revealed in tensions with Greece, military operations in Iraq and Syria, the military presence in Libya, the number of refugees in Turkey and Turkey's growing importance in world politics all highlight the importance of conflict resolution and diplomacy. Including a women's perspective in this field, meaning increasing the number of women diplomats in mediation efforts, interjecting the WPS

agenda into Turkey's international dealings, such as humanitarian assistance and refugee relief efforts, and improving women's roles would improve Turkey's standing in global politics.

WPS, as a policy agenda, usually needs champions in the bureaucracy who can push for its priority. The Turkish MFA is a potential champion since it is one of the top ministries in Turkey with the highest representation of women. At the time of writing, women constituted 37 percent of the personnel and 27 percent of the ambassadors working abroad.<sup>iii</sup> Women's hard work and success within the ministry, as well as the encouragement of some male politicians and civil servants, enabled the MFA to make considerable progress toward becoming a more gender-equal workplace, according to the women diplomats interviewed for this research. Yet, an overwhelming majority of the dozen of female diplomats interviewed admitted not having a particular gender perspective, and when asked about UNSCR 1325 appeared to be unaware of its existence.<sup>iv</sup> Some had a faint idea, and the few who knew about it were familiar with it only because of their previous positions in the international organization.

A dozen women diplomats, 10 of them still on active duty, were interviewed for this research. Structured focused interviews that inquired about diplomats' knowledge on UNSCR 1325, their views on women and diplomacy, and their own experiences were conducted from October to December 2020 in Ankara and Istanbul, in person and online. Since the majority of the interviewees are still on active duty, the interviews were not audio recorded and neither the participants' names nor any information that could reveal their identities will be disclosed. This research first seeks to understand whether the WPS agenda can be furthered and how women diplomats see women's role in conflict resolution, mediation, peace-making, and peacekeeping.

This policy paper first takes a look at the MFA and the evolution of this space for women diplomats. Senior women diplomats provided most of the information on women's place in the ministry and numbers were provided by the active diplomats who received them from the ministry themselves. It is important to note that this paper is unique in its access to these types of resources. Studies on women diplomats in Turkey are very few.<sup>v</sup> In the second part the paper focuses on women diplomats' views on UNSCR 1325 and on their experience in negotiation, mediation, peacekeeping, and peace-making issues. Lastly, the paper makes

recommendations to the MFA on how to incorporate UNSCR 1325 into the mediation efforts of Turkey and how to improve women diplomats' work in WPS.

### **Women in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkey**

Turkish women were granted voting and election rights in 1934. This decision came nearly a decade after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 – a decade earlier than a similar law in France, for instance, and a year before the principle of secularism was included in the Turkish constitution.<sup>vi</sup> Turkey thus became one of the first few Muslim majority countries to recognise women's voting rights. Yet, women's participation in political life has been very poor in Turkey, even to this day. Currently, women make up only 17 percent of the 584 members of the Turkish Parliament that convened after the 2018 general elections, and this number represents an increase thanks to strong campaigning of women's groups especially in 2007 and 2011.<sup>vii</sup> Women's trajectory in the MFA has followed a pattern similar to the Turkish Parliament, yet their recent ascent within the ministry's corridors is more promising in terms of women's meaningful participation in decision-making mechanisms.

Turkish women started to work as civil service officials shortly before World War 1. Women began to work for the MFA as early as 1932,<sup>viii</sup> well before several Western European countries including Great Britain (1946), Sweden (1948) and Italy (1963).<sup>ix</sup> Another progressive policy in the MFA in Turkey was that, unlike other countries, there was no official ban on marriage for women willing to make careers in the foreign office.<sup>x</sup> Moreover, equal pay for equal work was a practice endorsed early on, as dictated by law.

Adile Ayda, the first woman to begin working in the MFA in 1932, had to face a different obstruction: the ban on being appointed to foreign missions. Ayda left the ministry in 1934 for this reason, only to return in 1957 after the ban was overturned.<sup>xi</sup> Between 1957 and 1959 six more women joined the MFA, and they were followed by an increasing number of women who started entering the diplomatic service in the 1960s and '70s. Yet many of them left the ministry when they decided to get married.<sup>xii</sup> The ban on diplomat couples being appointed to the same mission abroad was another setback. They were only allowed to be appointed to the same hardship posts. Some took time off to be with their husbands while on duty in foreign missions, which slowed down advancement in their own diplomatic careers. Later on this ban was flexed, enabling couple diplomats to be appointed together to a mission

abroad.<sup>xiii</sup> There are currently dozens of married diplomat couples, thanks to the fact that this ban was lifted and the practice ended.

While it takes approximately 25 years to become an ambassador, which is more or less the same as for most other countries, it was not until 1992 that Turkey saw its first woman diplomat reach the rank of ambassador. Filiz Dinçmen, who became the first Turkish woman ambassador in 1982, to the Hague, also became the first woman, in 1998, to be appointed as the deputy undersecretary of political affairs, one of the top positions within the ministry.<sup>xiv</sup> However, it took another decade to see the second woman earn this title. Fügen Ok became an ambassador in 1992 and was appointed as Turkey's permanent representative to the United Nations in Vienna.<sup>xv</sup>

When veteran journalist Sedat Ergin pointed out the 10 percent increase in the number of women diplomats from 1990 to 1998, he defined the appointment of three women ambassadors in the same 1998 decree as 'revolutionary' at that time. Ergin titled his article 'Women Inching toward the Helm of Diplomacy' (*dışişleri kadınlardan sorulacak*).<sup>xvi</sup> He rightly noted that took decades to even modestly increase the number of women within the ministry.

A look at the foreign ministry's top positions in the 1980s and the 1990s could suggest a similar trajectory to that of women parliamentarians; an early granting of rights failing to bring a meaningful increase in numbers of women's participation. Yet the gender equality in the incoming cohort of the first half of the 1990s, and the increase in the number of posts available in the 2000s, made possible a leap forward in terms of women's growing influence in the MFA.

The first half of the 1990s is considered a turning point in terms of the nature of the MFA's cohort. The end of the Cold War brought about substantial changes to Turkey's foreign policy, making it more multidimensional. The dismemberment of the Soviet Union as well as Yugoslavia has opened at least 10 new ambassadorial positions in Turkey's neighbourhood. Moreover, in line with economic growth, Turkey's trade relations abroad led the country to focus not just on its close neighbourhood but on geographies such as Africa and Latin America that were not high on Turkey's agenda previously. As a result, the MFA started to endorse a more aggressive recruitment policy. The number of women entering the ministry began to modestly catch up with numbers of men at least in the beginning of their

careers. Certain years have seen an equal number of women and men entering the foreign ministry, in 1991 for instance when of the 28 new entrants 14 were women.

The developments of the post–Cold War, especially the wars in the Caucasus and the Balkans as well as the ensuing turmoil in the Middle East after the first Gulf War, increased the interest of average citizens in foreign policy issues. According to a retired woman ambassador, this led more women students to be interested in working for the ministry.<sup>xvii</sup>

In the meantime, the number of universities was increasing in Turkey, and the international relations and political science departments in both public and private universities started to send their recent graduates to work for the MFA. The once uncontested monopoly of Ankara University’s Faculty of Political Science (Siyasi Bilimler Fakültesi, SBF) (which can be likened to France’s Ecole National d’Administration) in providing the main bulk of diplomats was broken by the mid-1990s. The MFA embraced this surge in numbers and encouraged more women students to enter the ministry through visits to universities. In the 2000s, former undersecretaries of the ministry encouraged female diplomats to visit universities, to lure future women graduates to take the MFA exams.

Ten years later, in 2019, Ergin wrote another column on women in diplomatic service. This time the title read ‘In the Ministry, the Future Belongs to Women’.<sup>xviii</sup> Since the ratio of women career diplomats in the ministry went from 24 percent in 1998 to 33 percent in 2020, there is reason to hope that Ergin’s vision will come true.

### **Being a Woman Diplomat in the MFA**

The numbers, however, are not enough. What also matters is the working culture: to what degree women feel that they are on equal terms with their male colleagues and also to what degree the glass ceilings in the ministry can be broken.

All of the interviewed diplomats attributed the growing presence of women first and foremost to their own success. One interviewee said women had to fight their way up.<sup>xix</sup> Another said theirs was a bottom-up movement; in other words, they were not granted special treatment for their advancement.<sup>xx</sup> Obviously with whom they worked made a difference; so while some said they were discriminated against in their early years, some said they never encountered any discrimination. An interviewee whose first assignment after her entry to the ministry in the first half of the 1990s was a department handling hard-core

issues said she knew she was not wanted there because of her sex. The interviewee recalled: ‘When I left for a foreign mission abroad, my superior told the personnel department that I should be replaced by a male diplomat. When I asked why, he simply answered “a man is better”. Although I was replaced by a male colleague, the department kept calling me to consult me about the files’.<sup>xxi</sup>

The fact that some male colleagues deemed women diplomats should not be assigned to hard-core security issues did not mean doors were institutionally closed to women diplomats in terms of such issues. The generation that entered the ministry in the 1990s worked in all departments involving hard-core security, even early in their careers.

Interviewee 7 recalled that in the first half of the 2000s the high numbers of women in the Turkish Permanent Representation in NATO attracted the attention of officials from NATO’s international secretariat. She stated that at times, Turkish women were the only female diplomats to sit in meetings that dealt with strictly military issues, such as defence planning committees.

While some senior male diplomats can still have gender stereotyped reactions, interviewees admitted that the male culture in the MFA has weakened, so they do not feel any intimidation in expressing their views. Female diplomats interviewed argued that in the internal decision-making mechanisms women have an equal say with men, enforcing our assumption that women’s quantitative presence is having a qualitative impact. Interviewee 6 said she always felt at ease in expressing her views even in the presence of the Minister. Another one recalled her objection to a high-level general while she was a junior diplomat, implying she was in fact more courageous than her male superiors.<sup>xxii</sup>

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the ministry’s working culture does not bar women from dealing with hard-core security issues and at least from the deliberations of the interviews we can assume women have an equal say with men when it comes to decision making.

The picture is somewhat mixed when it comes to breaking the glass ceiling. It was not until the late 1980s that the ministry saw for the first time a woman appointed to one of the top positions. In 1988, Filiz Dinçmen became the deputy undersecretary responsible for political affairs; Yet, it took 19 years to have another woman ambassador, Zergün Korutürk,

appointed to the same position. Currently (as Turkey's parliamentary system has changed to a presidential system) of the three deputy foreign ministers none are women.

However, as of December 2020, about 30 percent of the high positions in the MFA are held by women. Of the 28 general directors 9 are women, amounting to 32 percent, and of the 52 deputy directors, 15, amounting to 29 percent, are women. Although the ratio is not ideal (meaning 50 percent) women are not discriminated against in terms of their areas of responsibilities. On the contrary, women diplomats are being trusted with issues of peace and security.

Four general directorates (GD) within the MFA that deal with peace and security issues are headed by women diplomats as of December 2020:

- GD on bilateral political relations with Africa,
- GD on research and security affairs department, which is also responsible for the fight against international terrorism,
- GD on multilateral political affairs department, which includes the United Nations under its responsibility,
- GD on the international security affairs and disarmament.

The international security affairs and disarmament department which deals primarily with NATO is headed for the first time by a woman, who was appointed in December 2020. Her deputy dealing with disarmament is also a woman. It is worth noting that the two deputy directors of the research and security affairs were also women from 2014 to 2019.

When it comes to ambassadorial posts, as of December 2020, 65 of the 260 ambassadors, meaning 25 percent of the ambassadors, are women. In Latin America 9 of the 17 missions are headed by women ambassadors, whereas out of 42 diplomatic missions in Africa, 13 are headed by women. Currently, a woman leads the embassy in Ethiopia, which is a conflict zone. Women diplomats, however, draw attention to the fact that the most critical capitals such as Washington, or UN Representation in New York, London, Moscow and Tehran, have not yet seen women ambassadors.

## **Women in Peace and Security Affairs**

United Nations Security Resolution 1325 draws attention to the role of women before, during and after conflict, pointing to the blindness of conventional policy making on gender. Women and men experience and solve conflict differently. Women are disproportionately victimised in wars, and they have specialised needs during disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, re-integration and post-conflict reconstruction.<sup>xxiii</sup> Moreover, when women are involved in mediation and peacebuilding, the likelihood of reaching an agreement, implementing the agreement and a longer peace period increases. Statistical analysis on 182 peace agreements signed between 1989 and 2011 shows that when women participate in peace processes as negotiators, mediators, signatories and even as witnesses, the likelihood of an agreement lasting at least 15 years increases by 35 percent.<sup>xxiv</sup>

While numbers make a positive difference and women diplomats in the Turkish MFA state the obvious, pointing out the lack of women ambassadors in top places, for a gender-sensitive foreign policy neither an increase in the number of women diplomats nor their postings to the most important capitals would suffice.

A woman ambassador who does not make use of the WPS agenda that has been furthered by the joint efforts of academia, civil society and women diplomats, and one who does not have a women's perspective in conflict resolution and diplomacy, is less likely to make a difference in policy. As explained in the preface of this research, in order to have a WPS agenda instituted within the foreign policy decisions and actions, a gender perspective is needed.

However, as they matured within the patriarchal culture of the bureaucracy none of the interviewees seem to have looked at the issues through a gender lens, especially early on in their careers. Asked about whether and how they saw themselves as women in peace and security issues, what their experiences (if any) in conflict resolution were, the diplomats admitted that they and their female colleagues approached things differently than men. One interviewee, for example, remembered how she held separate talks with the Armenian delegation, a country with which Turkey does not have any direct diplomatic relations, to ease Armenian doubts and stop them from blocking a resolution that Turkey defended in a multilateral organisation. It was after her efforts to disperse the doubts of the Armenian

delegation that the resolution passed.<sup>xxv</sup> Another diplomat recalled how her superior had once asked her to communicate a message on a security issue which had the potential of straining ties with another country. She objected, saying this was not an issue that was under her responsibility. Her superior insisted, arguing that she would do a better job in communicating the message in a smoother way, which could play a role in avoiding raising tensions between the two countries.<sup>xxvi</sup> In fact, the issue was handled better, avoiding creating additional tension. Interviews also revealed that the appointment of a woman in 2019 for the first time to a country like Bulgaria, with which Turkey had difficulties, was welcomed as a positive gesture by Bulgarian authorities as well.<sup>xxvii</sup>

Reciting their experiences and recalling memories, all women diplomats – except one who did not like the idea of being approached only because of being a woman diplomat – were convinced that they are better at starting a dialogue and building communication channels with their foreign counterparts, be they male or female, especially in multilateral platforms, which in turn facilitates finding common ground. Except one interviewee, all expressed that issues were more easily solved among women. Interviewee 1 admitted that she found working with women easier. She added that women can make a difference in peace negotiations as long as all the parties are women.

All interviewed diplomats also concluded that male diplomats are too rigid and tend to confine themselves to the guidelines they are given so much that they lose all flexibility. Women are flexible and better at fine tuning, which according to some is essential in keeping communication channels open and finding compromised solutions. Women diplomats admitted that men have an ego problem, which is a stumbling block for communication and reaching a compromise. An interviewee, who is strongly convinced that women can make a difference in conflict resolution and mediation, stated that men had too much self-confidence which also made them intransigent: ‘Once they voice a position during a negotiation they have difficulty in stepping back from that position. They have too much of a macho attitude’.<sup>xxviii</sup> Another interviewee said that men perceive foreign policy issues as a power struggle: ‘They look at it as a zero-sum game. It’s like a football match for them. They are either on the defence or on the offence. They are in constant search of winning over the other side’.<sup>xxix</sup>

Several women used the term empathy, which makes women better negotiators since discussions among different parties entail making an effort to understand the others’

positions. As interviewee 2 stated, understanding the third parties' position or the motivations behind that position enable women to address the underlying reasons that lead to that specific stance, which in turn might facilitate the debates.

It is also important to underline that all interviewees were adamant about pointing out that every individual is different and being a woman does not necessarily mean that they would be better at communication, finding middle ground, or be flexible and capable of seeing the intricacies of agreements.

While all interviewees voiced this reservation, they all said women were more multidimensional and better at multi-tasking than men. An interviewee, who believes women can make a difference, claimed that women were more capable of looking at an international treaty from different angles. She added: 'Women can foresee better than men what kind of an effect the first article of the treaty can have on the last article. They can see better the contradictions and inconsistencies in an agreement. They are better at calculating potential consequences. Treaties look nice on paper, like recipes which on paper look easy to do, but things differ when it comes to implementation. Women are more careful in terms of the practicality and the actual implementation of a treaty'.<sup>xxx</sup>

While female diplomats see the benefits of being a woman at the negotiation and mediation table, after being asked about their experiences, their unfamiliarity with Resolution 1325 which directly addresses these issues was striking. Even those familiar with 1325 did not appear to attribute importance to it. One interviewee stated that in a war-stricken Afghanistan making a specific effort on the implementation of 1325 sounded futile since basic needs like staying alive or securing food and water carried more urgency than women's empowerment.<sup>xxxi</sup> Yet, securing food and water is a primary concern for women, since women are the caretakers of the family. A gender perspective in post-conflict reconstruction would therefore make sure that there is a safe way for women (where they would not be attacked, and which they can easily access) to get to the water and make use of it. Thus, a budget for the safety force, a safe place for the construction of the well, fountain, etc., are arranged. A thorough understanding of a gender perspective is thus essential for diplomats.

## Recommendations on How to Integrate the WPS Agenda into Turkey's Foreign Policy and Adopt UNSCR 1325

UNSCR 1325 is a landmark resolution since it brought the Security Council's attention to women. In the last 20 years, UNSCR adopted 9 supplementary resolutions that underline the importance of including women at all levels and in each issue. Resolutions call for increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in national, regional and international institutions; in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict; in peace negotiations; in peace operations, as soldiers, police and civilians; and as Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General. The supplementary Resolution 2122 calls on all parties to peace talks to facilitate equal and full participation of women in decision-making.

To adopt UNSCR 1325 and supporting resolutions to improve women's participation in peace and security, Turkey has a rich list of options, especially considering its efforts at mediation and the number of experienced women diplomats. Since the mid-2000s Turkey has started to pay special attention to mediation activities. In 2010, Turkey launched the Mediation for Peace Initiative together with Finland. As it is stated in the MFA's website, the initiative was launched to enhance the prominence of mediation in preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution and provide additional resources for mediation efforts. It also aims at enhancing the preventive diplomacy/mediation capacities of the UN, regional organisations and individual countries.<sup>xxxii</sup>

Turkey has also been incremental in forming the 'Friends of the Mediation Groups' both within the UN as well as in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Similarly, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) has established a Contact Group of Friends of Mediation to contribute to the efforts in capacity building for mediation at the OIC. In a short period, the Group has become the second largest Contact Group within the organisation. The Group is co-chaired by Turkey, the OIC General Secretariat, Saudi Arabia and the Gambia.<sup>xxxiii</sup> The OIC Contact Group of Friends of Mediation reconvened on 27 June 2019 in Jeddah, at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, to discuss the preparation of an OIC document on culturally and locally sensitive mediation and the creation of a roster of specialists, mediators and special representatives of the OIC.

The latest resolution on ‘Strengthening the Mediation Capacity of the OIC’ submitted by Turkey to the OIC on 27–28 November 2020 mentions UNSCR 1325 as well, arguing that the OIC encourages inclusive mediation practices, taking into account as appropriate UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 2250 and 2419 to encompass relevant segments of society.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Since 2012, Turkey has also been hosting ‘Istanbul Conferences of Mediation’. The latest conference on 16 September 2020 brought together regional and international organisations in peace and mediation such as the United Nations, Organisation for Cooperation and Security in Europe and the African Union.

### **1. Incorporate gender aspect to Turkey’s efforts to promote mediation in multilateral platforms**

Given Turkey’s apparent efforts towards becoming a global player in mediation efforts, it will be beneficial for the MFA to have a closer look at UNSCR 1325 and the additional resolutions to incorporate the gender aspect into all these efforts. Not only would this be an easy target for Turkey to reach since it has an experienced diplomatic corps including a fair number of women diplomats, it would also equip Turkey with a higher moral standing amongst the regions it aims to impress. Most importantly, if properly adopted and implemented UNSCR 1325 would guarantee women’s participation in peace efforts at all levels.

- MFA can hold a special meeting on how to incorporate UNSCR 1325 with the ‘Mediation for Peace’ initiative.
- MFA can take into account UNSCR 1325 in all its activities within the OIC.
- The Mediation for Peace Certificate Programme intended for junior diplomats from OIC secretariat and member states can add a special section on UNSCR 1325 to the programme and make sure half of the attendees are women.
- ‘Istanbul Conferences of Mediation’, which have been hosted by Turkey since 2012, can serve as a platform to discuss UNSCR 1325 to see how to adopt the Resolution in the next conference in 2021.

## **2. Ensure women's participation in multilateral and bilateral diplomacy**

UNSCR 1325 also 'urges the UN Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard calls on the Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster'.<sup>xxxv</sup>

- Turkey can present female candidates both for UNSG special envoy and as mediators. Since there are a significant number of women ambassadors, who due to the limited number of actual vacancies within the ministry are not assigned to specific duties, this is an easily reachable target.
- The Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs can agree on a protocol whereby women ambassadors can be appointed as civilian advisors to Turkish Armed Forces operations outside of Turkey (both in its operations in countries like Syria, Iraq or in NATO operations like Bosnia or Afghanistan). Since Defence Ministry has currently a shortage of women personnel, this action will facilitate Defense Ministry's mission to incorporate women's perspective.
- Given Turkey's active role in humanitarian assistance and refugee relief efforts women envoys could be appointed to cities with high refugee density like Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa and Hatay. This could facilitate the country's cooperation with donor countries and international organizations.
- Female diplomats from Turkey can be can be advised to provide knowledge and experience to third countries' female diplomats through bilateral or regional programmes organised by Turkish female diplomats. Turkey's neighbourhood from the Caucasus to the Middle East is rich with conflict-driven countries, and tensions with Greece, ongoing military operations in Iraq and Syria, military presence in Libya as well as the growing number of refugees in Turkey highlight the importance of a gendered perspective of conflict resolution and diplomacy.
- The MFA can found an Interagency Taskforce on Women Peace and Security with relevant ministries, institutions as well as civil society organisations to raise attention towards alternative perspectives regarding conflict resolution and diplomacy with a particular focus on women's roles in security and peace. To construct long-lasting peace, there is a desperate

need for knowledge and experience sharing between different parts of society on peace and security issues, and the culmination of a culture of women, peace and security.

<sup>i</sup> MFA, “The United Nations Organization and Turkey”, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-united-nations-organization-and-turkey.en.mfa> (accessed 25 January 2021).

<sup>ii</sup> All the information in this report that does not cite a specific resource is gathered from interviews done with officials who are still on active duty. Barçın Yinanç who co-authored the paper is a renowned senior journalist. Yinanç carried out the interviews in Ankara and in Istanbul with senior officials.

<sup>iii</sup> Foreign Ministry correspondence, interviewed by authors, November 2021.

<sup>iv</sup> A gender perspective means, first, being aware of what gender is. Gender is different than biological sex that we are born into. Gender is all the roles, prejudices and assumptions about the sexes that affect our community life. For instance when women are believed to be more emotional and weak and therefore unfit for holding high-level public office, that is a gendered assumption that puts an obstacle in front of women who would like to run for public office.

<sup>v</sup> For an overview of the state of research on women diplomats in Turkey see Rahime Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm and Bahar Rumelili, “Diplomaside Kadın ve Egemen Maskülenlik: Değişen Normlar ve Pratikler”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler*15, no. 57 (2018): 3-18, DOI: 10.33458/uidergisi.518039.

<sup>vi</sup> The women’s movement in Turkey dates back to late 19th century. Women in the Ottoman Empire demanded their rights to inheritance, civil marriage and education. The first feminist association was founded as early as 1913. See Serpil Çakır, “Feminism and Feminist History-Writing in Turkey: The Discovery of Ottoman Feminism”, in *Aspasia: The International Year Book of Central, Eastern and Southeastern European Women’s and Gender History*, volume 1 (Berghahn Journals, 2007), pp. 61–83.

<sup>vii</sup> Zeynep Alemdar, “Women Count Turkey 2018, Women, Peace and Security and UNSCR 1325 in Turkey”, [https://www.operation1325.se/sites/default/files/women\\_count\\_turkey.pdf](https://www.operation1325.se/sites/default/files/women_count_turkey.pdf), p. 12

<sup>viii</sup> Yunus Özger, “The Issue of Women’s Employment in State Service in the Ottoman Empire and Women in the Sicill-i Ahval Record”, *History Studies: International Journal of History* 4, no. 1 (2012): 419–446, <http://www.acarindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423902451.pdf>

<sup>ix</sup> Zergün Korutürk, retired ambassador, Conference in Özyeğin University, 9 March 2020.

<sup>x</sup> The ban was lifted in the United States in 1971, followed by the UK in 1973.

<sup>xi</sup> Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm and Rumelili, “Diplomaside Kadın ve Egemen Maskülenlik”, p. 13.

<sup>xii</sup> Barçın Yinanç, “A Working Mother’s Career in Diplomacy”, *Turkish Daily News Weekend Issue*, 20–21 February 2010; Nazlı Yüzbaşıoğlu, “Kadın diplomatlar hariciyeyi anlattı (2)”, 8 March 2017, <https://www.pusulahaber.com.tr/kadin-diplomatlar-hariciyeyi-anlatti-2-535112h.htm> (accessed 12 February 2021).

<sup>xiii</sup> Sedat Ergin, “Dışişleri Kadınlardan Sorulacak”, *Hürriyet*, 22 February 1998, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/disisleri-kadinlardan-sorulacak-39007352> (accessed 11 December 2020).

<sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xv</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xvi</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>xvii</sup> Interview no. 5.

<sup>xviii</sup> Ergin, “Dışişleri Kadınlardan Sorulacak”.

<sup>xix</sup> Interview no. 7.

<sup>xx</sup> Interview no. 12.

<sup>xxi</sup> Interview no. 7.

<sup>xxii</sup> Interview no. 7.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Carol Cohn, “Beyond the Women Peace and Security Agenda: Why We Need a Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace”, in *Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace Project Background Paper, Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights*, 2017, p. 2.

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- xxiv Marie O'Reilly, "Why Women: Inclusive Security and Peaceful Societies", *Inclusive Security* (2017), p. 4.
- xxv Interview no. 2.
- xxvi Interview no. 10.
- xxvii Interviews no. 3 and no. 4.
- xxviii Interview no. 2.
- xxix Interview no. 6.
- xxx Interview no. 7.
- xxxi Interview no. 4.
- xxxii MFA, "Resolution of Conflicts and Mediation", <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/resolution-of-conflicts-and-mediation.en.mfa> (accessed 10 December 2020).
- xxxiii *Ibid.*
- xxxiv Resolutions on Political Affairs Adopted by the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, 27–28 November 2020, OIC, <https://www.oic-oci.org/docdown/?docID=6626&refID=3255>, p. 138
- xxxv Resolution 1325 (2000) adopted by the Security Council at its 4213<sup>th</sup> meeting, on 31 October 2000, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/426075> (accessed 4 February 2021).



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She has extensive experience in promoting gender equality in Turkey, working with public and private actors; international organizations including UNWomen, World Bank, and the European Union and civil society groups. She has conducted research, prepared assessment and monitoring reports, devised strategies for improving women's equal participation in various sectors.

Focusing on women, peace and security, Dr. Alemdar participated in various forums and consultation meetings on the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 organized by NATO, various United Nations Agencies, international NGOs. She received, designed, delivered and facilitated trainings on the UNSCR 1325.

Dr. Alemdar served on the editorial boards of *International Studies Perspectives* and *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, taught international politics, gender and politics and women's movements in various capacities. She was a visiting professor at the Center for Turkish Studies and the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. In 2014, she was selected as one of the four leaders under 40 for the Next Generation Leaders program by the Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C., where she was awarded the Next Generation Hurford Fellowship and spent her sabbatical leave.

She is the founder and director of the Women in Foreign Policy Initiative (WFP14) in Turkey. She received her BA in economics from Galatasaray University, MA from Patterson School of Diplomacy, Ph.D. in Political Science from University of Kentucky.

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Barçın Yinanç, is currently an independent journalist. She has a career of 30 years covering Turkey's foreign policy and international relations. She writes analysis and opinion articles for the websites T24 and Yetkinreport. She also provides comments to news channels.

Until September 2020 she was the opinion editor of the English language Hürriyet Daily News, where her columns were also published. She also conducted the paper's weekly interviews for nearly a decade.

Prior to that Yinanç worked in CNN Türk's İstanbul headquarters as an editor for a news program.

Yinanç started her career in Ankara; where she worked 15 years as a diplomatic reporter before moving to İstanbul.

She first started working in Milliyet's Ankara bureau in 1991 as a diplomatic reporter, covering Turkish foreign policy issues, mainly, Turkish – EU relations, transatlantic ties, regional developments from the Middle East to the Caucasus.

She travelled extensively in Europe and the Middle East, covering Turkey's leaders visits to these regions. In 2001 she became a tv reporter and worked in CNN Türk Ankara office until 2004 when she moved to İstanbul.

Yinanç studied international relations at the Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) in Ankara.

She is the Olympic torchbearer of 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

Barçın Yinanç speaks fluent English and French.

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