

State, Non-Governmental and International Organizations in the Possible Peace Process in Turkey's Conflict-Induced Displacement

AYŞE BETÜL ÇELİK

SSBF, Sabanci University, Orhanli Tuzla Istanbul, Turkey
bcelik@sabanciuniv.edu

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Turkey has experienced several different internal migration periods since its foundation in 1923. However, the internal displacement of the 1990s brought to the forefront the divergent discussions on whether this wave of internal displacement can be approached from a traditional developmentalist approach or whether critical issues pertaining to the Kurdish Question also need to be addressed, requiring a broader understanding of what peace means to IDPs and different actors. This article studies these two approaches which are taken by the Turkish state, local non-governmental organizations and international organizations. It discusses Turkey's internal displacement issue and Kurdish Question and analyses these actors' different perspectives on the policies related to the areas affected by the conflict, and to addressing internal displacement. It argues that internal displacement is an important issue to be addressed in peace processes. Without acknowledging different perspectives presented by different actors neither peace nor development is possible.

Keywords: internal displacement, Kurdish Question in Turkey, Non-Governmental Organizations, International Organizations, peace process

IDPs are the proverbial 'canaries in the coal mine'—their conditions and prospects are key barometers of whether peace will take root and development will take off, or whether conflicts will re-emerge and another spiral of violence will ensue (O'Neill 2009: 152).

Although Turkey has experienced several different internal migration periods since its foundation in 1923, it is the internal displacement of the 1990s that focused attention on the Kurdish Question, one of Turkey's most important yet disregarded policy issues. Even though the so-called Kurdish Question has a long history, dating from the Ottoman Empire, the present conflict between the insurgent Kurdistan Workers' Party (*Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan*

or PKK) and the Turkish state started with the PKK's attack on the Turkish military in southeastern Turkey in 1984. As a result of the violent conflict that took place in the eastern and southeastern cities and the insecurity stemming from it, around one million people, most of them Kurds, migrated to big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, Izmit, and Izmir in Western Anatolia, and Adana and Mersin in the Mediterranean region, but there was also a conflict-induced rural-to-urban migration within the eastern and southeastern Anatolian regions (Akşit *et al.* 1996; Human Rights Association n.d., 1995, 1998; Human Rights Watch 2002). The inhabitants of many rural settlements in these regions were evicted by the Turkish security forces or the PKK, or felt obliged to leave their homes because of security concerns (Kurban *et al.* 2006a). Many internally displaced Kurds had no information about the condition of their lands and property during their long absence from their homes due to the insecurity in the region (Human Rights Association 1995).

There are still many disagreements between state, non-governmental and international actors on how this displacement happened and how it should be solved. These disagreements, which can be characterized as a conflict between developmentalist and rights-based approaches, challenge dialogue, not only around the internal displacement issue, but also around the Kurdish Question in Turkish politics. This article studies these two approaches, which are taken by the Turkish state, local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs), and their different perspectives on the policies related to the areas affected by the conflict and to addressing internal displacement. As stated in the above quotation, the argument presented here is that without acknowledging these different perspectives, neither peace nor development is possible.

Taking Kurdish internal displacement as a case study, this article aims to answer the following questions. In cases where conflict-induced displacement is seen as a 'fight against terrorism' and an 'internal affair' by states, what role can local NGOs and IOs play in pressuring the states to acknowledge the rights of internally displaced people (IDPs)? What barriers exist in this process? When IDPs are ethnic groups whose group rights are not recognized by states, how are the issues of 'rights' linked to the process? These are important questions to be answered in linking internal displacement to development and peace.

Although this study focuses on the issue of Turkey's Kurdish internal displacement, it addresses important conceptual questions pertaining to several dilemmas in conflict-induced internal displacement. One such dilemma exists between locating the issue on a traditional developmentalist axis, or on a rights-based one. Whereas the traditional developmentalist approach to conflict-induced displacement centres around issues of aiding and providing economic assistance to IDPs and allocating resources to areas where internal displacement occurs, the rights-based approach focuses on demanding accountable services from duty-bearers as a matter of right. The rights-based approach to displacement entails a struggle to attain rights associated with

social, political and economic development that is inclusive and participatory. More importantly, it places equal importance on the outcome *and* process of development; therefore, it addresses power inequalities, discrimination, issues of accountability, and establishes an objective framework to manage conflicts and seek redress (UN Development Group Website).

With regard to the example of Kurdish displacement in Turkey, it has been argued that policy regarding internal displacement

within the framework of a depoliticized policy discourse centered on 'regional development' (...) disentangles the phenomenon of internal displacement from the Kurdish issue as a political problem and instead links it to a 'technical' agenda of development (Ayata and Yürkseker 2005: 6).

Picking up from this argument, this article maintains that the Turkish state's focus solely on policies of development, security and social aid prevents the formation of a holistic approach that addresses root causes, recognizes group rights, and establishes a durable peace. Yet, at the same time, even though they claim to be following a holistic approach, one that focuses on justice, reconciliation, and group rights, what NGOs working on this issue do is limited to providing discourse around these concepts, without necessarily pushing for a political and social environment fertile for dialogue and activities that would transform the conflictual relationship.

The other conceptual concern is the discussion of how the state would be challenging other actors such as the NGOs and IOs in linking internal displacement to peace processes and peace-building¹ efforts. In his 2010 address to the United Nations, the then Representative of the Secretary-General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (RSG) Walter Kälin stated that:

Where relevant, IDPs should participate in peace processes. Their rights, needs and legitimate interests need to be addressed in peace agreements and peace-building strategies emerging from these processes, which often predetermine whether and how durable solutions will be ensured. At the same time, durable solutions for IDPs may be a key element in building a lasting peace. Humanitarian and development actors have to analyse the linkages between conflict and displacement to understand how peace processes can strengthen the potential for durable solutions (and vice versa) (Kälin 2010: 17).

Another conceptual question that needs to be addressed is how other issues besides return, reintegration and resettlement (the three Rs) can be incorporated into peace processes in the presence of coercive states which are hegemonic actors in the process. Most literature on internal displacement focuses on these three Rs since these are declared by the UN to be the components of durable solutions to internal displacement. However, as new research in internal displacement shows, other issues like property, discrimination, compensation, reconciliation between the groups as well as peace in the country emerge as important concepts in addressing IDP rights and needs

(Fagen 2009; Koser 2007; McHugh 2010; O'Neill 2009). There is a need to shift the focus from the three Rs and discuss new issues such as reconciliation in the presence of a coercive political culture and institutions.

Studying the role of NGOs and IOs through the question of Turkey's Kurdish internal displacement is important not only because internal displacement is one of the major issues of the overall conflict but also because since 2009,² there have been debates concerning how the country can resolve the conflict through peaceful means, and a possible peace process without addressing the rights and needs of the IDPs cannot be sustainable. The usage of 'peace process' and 'peace-building' might strike readers as odd since there are no formal negotiations and the violence continues. However, since the capture of the PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, violence continues only sporadically and recently it has been officially admitted that backdoor talks and unofficial contacts are made from time to time with the PKK and its imprisoned leader Öcalan.³

The data for this article were drawn from the author's fieldwork in the region affected by forced migration. Between February 2004 and February 2007, the author had interviews with the representatives of NGOs, state officers and IDPs, and attended some meetings of IOs and NGOs. Secondary data, such as newspaper articles and NGO publications and public announcements (until December 2010) were also analysed for the study. The fieldwork took place in 13 of the 14 cities giving rise to IDPs, as well as the two largest host cities in western Turkey, namely, Ankara and Istanbul. In the former, the author interviewed IDPs, state officers, representatives of international organizations and NGO leaders, whereas in the latter two cities, interviews were conducted only with the leaders of the NGO headquarters and IOs. The total number of interviews was 97, 19 of which were held with representatives from the state (mostly governors, vice-governors are the representatives within the related ministries), 58 with leaders of civil society, and representatives from UNDP and the European Commission in Ankara, and 20 with IDPs. All interviews except for those with IDPs were tape-recorded and transcribed. All interviews but one were held in Turkish. In that case, an interpreter translated the (IDP) respondent's words while the author took notes.

The Centrality of the State in Internal Displacement

It is more than a decade since the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were brought to the attention of the international community as a tool to prevent internal displacement and effectively deal with its consequences. The Guiding Principles define IDPs as 'persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, generalized violence and violations of human rights' (OCHA 1998). This definition recognizes *groups* as well as individuals as victims of these experiences.

The differences between categories, and the inclusion of *groups* as victims, are crucial in understanding the role of the state *vis-à-vis* the IDPs in cases where the source of forced mobility is the conflict between groups (and where the state is an insignificant or non-influential actor); or between the state and a social group. Conflict-induced internal displacement caused by the failure of the polity often are linked directly to the state's active involvement in a conflict (i.e., the state choosing a side in the conflict through its policies), its inability to perform its functions by failing to isolate itself from incompatible interests, or its failure to take seriously or even comprehend the nature of the conflict.

As Ibeanu states, population displacement is first and foremost a problem of the state, whether or not the state is a party to the conflict. 'In all modern societies it is the state that frames, focuses and mediates conflicts' (1999: 163). Therefore, a strong state is a good actor in addressing the issues of internal displacement. However, if the state is a party to the conflict, it is possible that it will try to dominate not only the policies but also the discourses around the internal displacement issue, and even fail to fulfil its basic responsibilities before, during and after the displacement. As Ibeanu (1999) argues, in some countries, states place a priority on state security over human security and are unable effectively to rise above, and manage conflicts by non-violent means.

In order to prevent and deal with the consequences of internal displacement, states should establish prevention mechanisms, provide assistance and protect individual rights during forced movement and return (such as the right to life, right to property), facilitate safe and voluntary return of the IDPs, and improve and strengthen state institutions to guarantee and protect these rights (Lee 1996; Hampton 1998; Cohen and Deng 1998; Martin *et al.* 2002; Mooney 2000). Internal displacement is above all a breach of human rights and the state's first responsibility must be to protect these rights for its citizens. However, if the state is a hegemonic actor with coercive⁴ political structures, it can be the actor that determines the extent of these rights. Especially if the source of the conflict-induced displacement is the acceptance or rejection of certain group rights, it is less likely that a state would list these rights when addressing protection (Klopp *et al.* 2010). Moreover, it can limit the functioning of the IOs and international NGOs, claiming that this issue is an internal affair and that IDPs are linked to terrorist organizations and that, therefore, resolution of the IDP problems needs to wait until 'the fight against terrorism' is won. In such cases, the state can maintain that the legal IDP mobilization and/or their representation by civil society organizations are linked to illegal organizations.

Although the state is still the most dominant actor concerning the protection of the rights of IDPs, a growing literature has recently started demonstrating the need for NGOs and IOs to pressure states to address these issues, especially in peace processes, agreements and peace-building efforts (Fagen 2009; Koser 2007; O'Neill 2009). This, in a way, can be seen as a step toward

recognizing the role of other actors—national and international—along with the state; nevertheless, it is also a fact that addressing IDPs’ needs and rights can help in dealing with the root causes of a conflict and prevent further displacement.

NGOs and IOs as Competing Actors in Conflict-Induced Displacement?

Internal displacement is a multi-layered and complex issue (see Table 1 for the issues in the Kurdish conflict-induced displacement). Overcoming the legacy of displacement and fostering return migration require that local actors, the state, and international actors not only cooperate but also synchronize their efforts. The assumption behind this argument is that each actor has its capacities and limitations, and that any effort that is not supported by all will not produce a long-lasting solution.

Addressing conflict-induced displacement requires paying special attention to the relationship between the conflicting groups. Representation of the voices of IDPs becomes an important issue, particularly in cases where there are no political actors to represent the groups, as when the IDP group is an unrecognized or repressed minority. In this case, NGOs can play an important role in reframing the internal displacement issue in a way that is different from how the state characterizes it, in discussing the roots of the conflict with local administrations and state organizations, and in directly representing the people affected by internal displacement. However,

Table 1

Issues in Kurdish Internal Displacement				
Economic	Political	Social	Relational	Security
Damaged or non-existent infrastructure	Damaged political institutions or strong coercive institutions	Unemployment and poverty	Mistrust between the state and IDPs	Existence of armed opposition
Retarded developmental process	Representation of IDPs seen as illegitimate	Weak social care (Education, health etc.)	Existence of village guards as a threat to group relations	Existence of landmines
Conflicts over ownership	Disturbed human rights practices	Weakened social fabric and trauma	Mistrust between the state institutions and NGOs	Existence of village guards
Restricted access to land and fields	Unrecognized link between internal displacement and the Kurdish Question	Social imbalance (gender)	Societal polarization and discrimination in cities that host IDPs	Continuation of sporadic violence

in many conflict-induced displacements, states disregard the presence of NGOs or consider them illegal, arguing that they have connections with or are representatives of ethnic parties or 'terrorist' groups. Apart from Latin America, there are few places where NGOs have been able to protect the rights of IDPs *vis-à-vis* the state or have exercised pressure in the enactment and implementation of the necessary laws (see Çelik 2007). Previous studies in the field of migration found that NGOs become important actors, especially in providing services and putting pressure on the state for a change in policies (Paffenholz and Spurk 2006). However, due to their various limitations (e.g., financial sources, human capital, and technical expertise), most NGOs need assistance from and/or cooperation with international organizations to undertake such roles.

In recent years, the UN has acknowledged that civil society organizations play an increasingly active role in conflict prevention, management and resolution. Several studies have summarized these roles as emergency relief and assistance (or longer term social and economic work) (e.g. Anderson 1996; Maynard 1999; Gross Stein 2000), or work concerned with social justice, and human rights advocacy and monitoring (Hackett 2000; Aall 2001) in situations of potential or actual conflict. It is important to note that these studies, until recently, predominantly referred to NGO work as humanitarian assistance and advocacy (Korn 1999), and focused mostly on international actors as aid providers. In fact, besides service delivery, NGOs can undertake several functions in peace-building: protection of civilians, monitoring and accountability, advocacy and public communication, socialization and creation of a culture of peace, conflict sensitive social cohesion, intermediation and facilitation (Paffenholz and Spurk 2006). However, the relevance of these functions to peace-building differs according to the phases of conflict. More importantly, the traditional service delivery function is only effective if used systematically as entry points for protection during armed conflict and when building social cohesion following it (Paffenholz 2009).

After the peace agreement in Guatemala, which incorporated the displacement issue into the peace agreement and process, NGOs also started to be seen as potential actors in track-two and grass-root peace processes (Koser 2007). This increasing potential of the NGOs in peace processes and peace-building is also evident in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Principle 28(2) states that 'special efforts should be made to ensure the full participation of internally displaced persons in the planning and management of their return and resettlement.' Especially in cases where IDPs are not represented by formal political bodies, NGOs can serve this important function.

Since in many conflict-induced internal displacements, states consider the matter a domestic one, and do not welcome international intervention, arguing that it is a breach of their sovereignty, the role of international organizations is usually limited to material and technical assistance and advising. However, IOs can play an important role as facilitators in initiating

discussions between competing actors and act like pressure groups through offering the parties rewards and punishments. Of course, in the second case, international actors' leverage, limitations and relations with parties are important factors in determining the success of moving them to a more cooperative approach.⁵

Kurdish Internal Displacement and its Consequences

Among scholars of forced displacement in Turkey, there are different views on why displacement took place. Some argue that internal displacement of the Kurds in the 1990s resulted from the pressure of the PKK or the state on the villagers to take sides in the conflict, or the insecurity that the villagers felt due to the war in the region (Kirişçi 1998; Çelik 2005) while others believe that the Turkish state had a systematic plan to displace Kurds and armed conflict in the 1980s provided this opportunity (Jongerden 2007; Ayata 2011). In 1987, a system of emergency rule (*Olağanüstü Hal* or OHAL), with a regional governor appointed for most of eastern and southeastern Turkey, was established. It aimed at controlling the region through strict state measures, supported by a village guard system consisting of thousands of pro-government civilians. Under these strict measures, many human rights abuses took place in the form of torture, killings and disappearances in the cities; whereas villages were evacuated and burned along with individual human rights abuses. As a consequence, many people were forced or felt obliged to leave their homes in the 14 provinces where OHAL was in operation. Internally displaced Kurds mostly migrated to big cities in western Anatolia as well as cities in the region.

For a long time, the Turkish state was unwilling to assist the IDPs and rejected international assistance. The state's position on this, however, has recently begun to change with Turkey's increasing willingness to comply with the norms of the European Community, more specifically with those of the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU). The clearest international dimension and direct recognition of the problem was evidenced by the Turkish state's welcome of the RSG Francis Deng in May 2002, followed by the gradual removal of the OHAL regime in eastern and southeastern Anatolia the same year. The Turkish state has since announced new resolutions and formulated policies to foster return migration and compensate for the losses occurred during its 'fight against terrorism.' Also known as the 'Compensation Law' (Law No. 5233), the Law on Compensation for Losses Resulting from Terrorism and the Fight against Terrorism, as indicated by its title, sees conflict-induced displacement as resulting from the state's *legitimate* fight to protect its sovereignty and does not recognize any wrongdoing on the part of the state or imply that it could not protect its citizens. The government, in coordination with the State Planning Organization, also commissioned Hacettepe University's Institute of Population Studies (HIPS) to conduct a comprehensive survey of IDPs in Turkey (HÜNEE 2006).

Following the RSG's recommendations, the government formed a commission in December 2004 in order to formulate a strategy document outlining its policy on IDPs. The framework for the government strategy entitled 'Measures on the Issue of Internally Displaced Persons and the Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project in Turkey' (Framework Document) was issued by the Council of Ministers as a special 'Decision of Principle' on 17 August 2005 (Ministry of Interior 2005).

Following this new framework for action, the government launched an action plan for service delivery to the IDPs (Van Action Plan 2006) in one of the provinces that gave rise to IDPs. The Action Plan not only signifies a change in the Turkish state's position to take into account the international committee's recommendations, but is also an important tool for analysing the Turkish state in action. Even though this Action Plan and other developments can be considered as improvements, they are still dominated by a traditional developmentalist conception of the problem. Moreover, even though the plan covers a broad range of topics, 'setting aside the issue of returns and resettlement, none of the "strategic measures" described in the plan are specific to IDPs' (Yükseker and Kurban 2009: 15).

The IDP Population: Needs and Priorities

The IDP population in Turkey is not homogenous. Variables such as age, gender, reason for migration, and location affect IDPs' problems, needs, and views about return, resettlement, reintegration and peace. Such divergences among the IDP population are important and should be taken into account in designing policies. Fagen shows that referring to the displaced population 'not as a homogenous whole but with reference to its component parts, including indigenous peoples, women, children, poor, and landless peasants' and firmly linking these 'with poverty alleviation *and* political participation' (2009: 41–42, emphasis added) can make the peace processes successful.

A state-commissioned study in Turkey found that the size of the migrant population is around a million (HÜNEE 2006). Half of this 'security-related migration' took place without the IDPs having received prior notice; and more than half the IDP population (around 55 per cent) are willing to return to their origins.

It is also interesting to note IDPs' relatively low level of awareness of the domestic resources available to them. Roughly half of the IDP population (53.4 per cent) was aware of the Compensation Law; and 79 per cent were aware of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Out of those who were aware of these legal procedures, only 37.1 per cent of the respondents have applied to the Turkish state under the Compensation Law and 8.9 per cent to the ECHR (HÜNEE 2006). One must note the relatively higher level of awareness of the ECHR, an international mechanism, as opposed to national mechanisms to which IDPs could resort. This relates to the issue of

mistrust between the state and the IDPs, hence they are resorting to international mechanisms to ask for acknowledgment of wrongdoing and compensation.⁶

The most common problems encountered in the place of destination are poverty, unemployment and health problems (the latter especially among women). Those who return usually complain about weak or non-existing state support for the reconstruction of their houses, insufficient livestock to support their family and the inadequacy of infrastructure in their villages, which are important conditions of return. A study in Ovacık, Tunceli found that the first priority for the IDPs in returning is ‘guarantee’ (that there will not be another forced migration); 60.2 per cent of respondents listed this as the number-one priority (Çelik *et al.* 2008).

In fact, the results of HÜNEE (2006) show that most IDPs are not willing to return. Many studies point out that internal displacement is now mostly an urban issue and it is usually men in the cities who are suffering financially and the elderly who would like to return (Kurban *et al.* 2006b). Most IDPs consider return as ‘return in the given conditions’ and do not want to return without some financial support, development and security in the region. Return may also be a political request made on principle, although the individual himself/herself is not thinking of returning. IDPs usually ask for return as a right and are more willing to return on a seasonal basis or to be able to visit relatives in their villages. Families and single women with children are less likely to return due to the difficulties of access to education in the villages. Return mostly divides families, in which case some members of the family stay in the city and some return due to economic difficulties. Those IDPs who are caught between the state and the PKK appear to be the most vulnerable and economically the worst off, because they are unable to get any support from any organization or groups. Therefore, for these IDPs poverty is the biggest hurdle for their survival in their places of destination, and ideal return should include the reconstruction of their houses and infrastructure as well as financial help from the state.

Although economic difficulties are a common problem among all IDPs, the importance of the issue varies depending on how politicized⁷ the IDPs become. Those who are ideologically close to the PKK, for example, link economic issues to cultural and political ones and ask the state, above all, to recognize their identity.

There should be no political pressure in the villages. The state should help us financially and psychologically . . . All these, however, are connected at the root. They have a societal dimension. The social peace should be established. The Kurdish Question [at the moment] is indexed-tied to terrorism but it is evident who should be listened to. Whoever is accepted by the society should be listened to . . . One should talk to all NGOs and have an idea . . . Thousands of people in the meetings are calling out Öcalan’s name as a delegate of peace (male IDP, 27, Diyarbakır, June 2006).

We will not return if even one village guard remains. I will never make peace with them. Only if they leave their arms will they be my brothers. In that case, they do not have to apologize . . . I wish they would let the ones [PKK members] in prison out. They would bring back the ones in the mountains. The ones in the mountains and the soldiers, they are both our sons. We do not want *aid*, we want *peace* (female IDP, 55, Van, July 2004, italics added).

Such requests, above all, point to a need for acceptance of IDPs' group identity, political representation, and dealing with this representation issue in any peace negotiations as the most important conditions for return and an end to their problems. These requests are very common among the IDP population who are active supporters of the Kurdish political and social organizations. They also often top the ones related to issues of poverty in the list of conditions for return. Other requests include reconstruction of their houses and regaining of their livestock; reconstruction of infrastructure (or in most cases 'construction'; especially in villages located in the mountainous areas, such infrastructure has never existed), and the establishment of 'peace'.

The use of the word 'peace' by IDPs needs some elaboration. IDPs do not simply mean the end of violence. When asked in detail, it becomes obvious that their use of the word goes beyond negative peace, and implies such concepts as disarmament, social re-integration of the PKK members, release of Öcalan and a general amnesty⁸ to those PKK members, both in the mountains and in prisons. Women in particular ask the state to find the 'truth' about extra-judicial killings and identify the perpetrators. This, IDPs claim, is a prerequisite to re-establish trust between them and the state. They argue that if the truth about the extrajudicial killings were revealed, there would be no need for public apology, although some IDPs also want official acknowledgments of wrongs, and an apology. A female IDP whose husband disappeared in 1993 and who has been living in poverty with her four children for the last 13 years since she was displaced, told me that the biggest need she had was to find the body of her husband and the ones who are responsible for her loss, and to get compensation:

I only know that my husband was alive for 12 days. I want accountability for our losses. Why did it happen? My children lost their father. I just want to know what he did [for this]. I want his dead body. . . . Put yourself in my shoes, what would you say? He is still 'disappeared'. I am still waiting for him until I find him. It is OK if they tell me that 'his body is over there, go and get him,' but I also want compensation. If he is not alive, I want his bones but I also want my compensation (female IDP, 34, Diyarbakır, July 2006).

Turkish State *vis-à-vis* NGOs and IGOs

Before analysing the role and discourses of NGOs in internal displacement, one has to understand the relations between the state and civil society in Turkey. As stated above, this relation has been dominated by the presence

of a coercive state which restricts NGO engagement in Turkey. The Turkish state is quite indifferent toward voluntary associations only if civic activism avoids regime-contesting activism, which is considered a conspiracy against the Republican order of Turkey (Kalaycıoğlu 2006). The Turkish state is suspicious of NGOs it perceives as engaging in activities supporting the 'historical enemy' ideologies of Islamic fundamentalism and ethnic separatism. Especially the human rights NGOs and those who work for the protection of the IDPs are vulnerable to detention, prosecution, intimidation, harassment, and closure. For example, the leader of an NGO, Göç-Der, was given a one-year prison sentence for 'inciting the population to enmity by discriminating among regions' under article 312/2 of the Penal Code; and it can be surmised that the rationale for the verdict was that the Göç-Der report defined IDPs in terms of ethnicity (Kurban *et al.* 2006a).

The Turkish state's position on the Kurdish Question and internal displacement has always focused on maintaining its hegemony in the conflict zone, securing its territorial sovereignty and *national security* rather than protecting *human security* (Drorian 2005).⁹ However, after 2002, the Turkish state, mostly through the EU membership process, felt *obliged* to make changes in its policies on internal displacement (Kurban *et al.* 2006b).

In contrast to the EU, the UN does not have much of a 'carrot and stick mechanism,' due to the sovereignty issues involved in the conflict (Article 2(7) of the UN Charter). It has a broad peace-building vision, which includes respect for human rights, good governance and the rule of law. What constrains the UN is its desire to avoid antagonizing the Turkish state, which might lead to a total deadlock in the peaceful resolution of the problems that emerge in the issue. This approach prevents it being very effective.

The EU's involvement in internal displacement, on the other hand, has been more indirect yet effective. The EU has placed increasingly greater pressure on Turkey with respect to democratizing the country, especially since Turkey was accepted as a candidate for membership of the EU in 1999. Through its annual progress reports, the EU has warned Turkey, without necessarily making a direct reference to the internal displacement issue, to invest in the southeast and to abide by the rule of law and sound human rights practices. The EU's intervention can be viewed as structural prevention rather than as a push for establishing a dialogue between the parties involved in the issue. However, following the reports of some NGOs (e.g., Kurban *et al.* 2006a), the European Commission stated in 2006 that the issue of reconciliation had not been addressed in the state's compensation approach in relation to past human rights violations committed against IDPs, such as the burning and destruction of property, killings, disappearances and torture (European Commission 2006).

Besides its direct structural interventions, the EU is also an important donor to the NGOs directly, and influences the policies related to their functioning, indirectly. The CIVICUS report contends that:

the EU was frequently referred to [by civil society organizations or CSOs] as an elixir in addressing challenges with regards to rights and freedoms, providing funding for CSOs, promoting connections among CSOs, enabling citizens to make better use of their civic rights and increasing public awareness of CSOs (2006: 19).

Yet, at the same time, indirect effects such as funding CSOs through micro-credits have created NGOs that focus on project production (thus, an avenue to gain money in some cases), rather than a genuine representation of the IDP population. Also, as Ayata and Yökseker pointed out, the EU's indirect role of funding NGOs *might* lead to a possible problem of leftist, Islamic and Kurdish NGOs being left out of the competition for EU funds if they fail to adopt the 'liberal Western' advocacy language (2007: 45).

According to the Framework for National Responsibility, developed by the Brookings Institution–University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement and presented by the RSG, Walter Kälin, to the UN Human Rights Council in 2006 (UN Document E/CN.4/2006/71/Add.1.), it is the responsibility of national authorities to work together with NGOs to protect IDPs, raise national awareness of the displacement problem, and collect data for development of a national legal framework and a national policy. Turkish state officials believe that while the support of NGOs, their cooperation and partnership are essential for sustainable return policies, NGO support is favourable in 'the fields of education, health and income generating activities which are relevant to social and economic development in the scope of KDRP (RVRP)' (Van Action Plan 2006: 10). In other words, NGOs are seen as service providers and their cooperation is desirable for but limited to activities that fall within socio-economic development. In fact, the scope of these activities parallels what most NGOs already do in the Kurdish-populated regions. However, they also add the issue of 'group rights' to this perspective. For example, almost all NGOs working with IDPs emphasize the need to use Kurdish, as some IDPs (especially women) cannot speak Turkish.¹⁰ They also ask the state to acknowledge that the IDPs are Kurds and that the displacement policies should be discussed within the broader Kurdish Question.

In the presence of a state which is suspicious of NGO activities, NGOs have been restricted to gathering their own data about the number of displaced people and evacuated villages, and asking the state to compensate the losses incurred by the IDPs. Their efforts, however, were only effective in changing some articles of the Compensation Law. Just recently, the Turkish state started to consult *some* NGOs. Yet, most NGOs believe that the authorities try to promote the creation of NGOs which they can control and favour when engaging in consultations with civil society actors, or allocating resources (IDMC 2006; Yökseker and Kurban 2009).

In recent years, however, several NGOs have emerged that have initiated an analysis of internal displacement and the framing of return migration

distinct from that of the state. These NGOs, for example, the Migrants' Solidarity Association (Göç-Der), Human Rights Association (İHD), and the Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed People (Mazlum-Der), whose activities are focused on human rights, have for a long time been asking the state to provide some kind of compensation, right to return, economic guarantees (e.g., investments in the region, solving the unemployment problem), protection of cultural rights (e.g., right to be taught in and to broadcast in Kurdish), and de-militarization of the region (e.g., abolition of the village guard system, removal of landmines and establishing the rule of law to replace the arbitrary power of the security forces). These requests, in fact, parallel the ones that the EU has been making to the Turkish state for a while. In its 2010 progress report, the European Commission emphasized the security threat posed by both village guards and landmines to the inhabitants of eastern and southeastern Turkey (European Commission 2010).

The NGOs of this type argue that the state disregards and excludes the owners of the problem from the discussion of formulating policies and a possible dialogue process, which they believe is a handicap to finding an effective solution to the problem.

This problem remains as it was in the 1993–1994 period because nobody responded to these people. Neither were the laws responsive to their needs and demands. We believe that in order to overcome these problems, the owners of the problems should be listened to. This is the first and the most important prerequisite. I cannot resolve your problems and produce remedies without listening to you and by deciding on behalf of you. But unfortunately, up until now this has been the case. How can this resolve the issue? (President of Batman Human Rights Association, 7 July 2004).

The most important remedy is to create an environment where the people of this geography can easily explain themselves (President of Mardin Egitim-Sen, July 2004).

As seen in the above quotes, NGO leaders claim that the remedy for the problem of IDPs is acknowledging past mistakes, listening to their demands, opening up dialogues for the peaceful resolution of the conflict, and making the state accountable.

Connecting the internal displacement issue to the Kurdish Question is also evident in the NGOs' argument of historical victimization. Most NGOs see the internal displacement of the 1990s as a continuation of internal displacement experienced by Kurds since the beginning of the Republic. For example, Göç-Der celebrates a 'Migration Week' in the third week of June every year, a date that is chosen to remember a very significant historical moment for Kurds. June 21, 1934, saw the enactment of the Resettlement Law, which relocated many Kurds in some provinces following the Ararat Rebellion.¹¹ Commemorating this date points to an important memory construction and

increased sense of belonging among the group's IDP members, yet at the same time feeds into their sense of victimization.

Some NGOs, while remembering this past, ask the state to ensure that similar events will not happen in the future:

The people of Dersim experienced the same internal displacement back in the 1930s, too. But they were allowed to come back to their villages after a certain time and none of their villages was destroyed. Somehow, they managed to reconcile with the state. Moreover, this happened during the period of nation-building. Now, it has happened again. These people want a guarantee that it will not happen again. They want to trust. Who is going to give them this guarantee? (UYD member, speech given at TESEV conference, Istanbul, 5 December 2006).

Many NGOs are uneasy with the fact that the state still perceives and presents the issue as one of 'terrorism' without mentioning the root causes, without accepting responsibility and recognizing that the IDPs are Kurds. Most of these NGOs also argue that de-historicizing the issue and de-linking internal displacement from the Kurdish Question would not produce effective outcomes.

Yes, you can approach internal displacement with a humane approach and by de-linking it from the Kurdish question. It is like cutting a gangrened finger from the body. But why did my body produce the gangrene? (President of Diyarbakır Göç-Der, Diyarbakır, 22 January 2007).

You cannot solve the issue of displacement without resolving the Kurdish Question because you cannot make a person happy solely with financial aid... Tell me dear professor, if someone came and told you that you could not speak Turkish, that you will say that you are an Armenian or a Kurd, would you be happy? I mean, you cannot resolve the issue by only addressing the socio-economic problems (President of Bar Association, Şırnak, July 2007).

In fact, in a context where such issues are not discussed or represented by political parties due to the national election threshold,¹² it becomes much harder to separate the issues of rights of a group from the political context, arguing that the displacement needs to be dealt with as a socio-economic issue. In fact, de-linking it from its political context itself is taking a political stance. In response to the state's deliberate de-linkage of the issue from its political aspects, most NGOs discuss the need for changes at the national level, such as lowering the election threshold. However, such political confrontation diminishes NGOs' influence. Along with advocacy of macro changes, the hard task awaiting the NGOs is helping transform state-individual and intergroup relations through such activities as problem-solving workshops, dialogue groups and educational activities (see relational column in Table 1). This also decreases their potential to initiate a dialogue with the state, and feeds into a vicious cycle created by state accusations that the NGOs act like political parties, to which NGOs react. Such a reactionary

position over macro issues also prevents NGOs from developing long-term holistic approaches to the conflict.

NGOs of the second type take a more holistic approach to the issue. They try to influence the public through their reports and public activities. Their direct target group is the policy makers, whom they try to reach through their reports prepared by professional experts and academics. TESEV is one such foundation emphasizing this:

We do not conduct petition campaigns, lobby or go out in the streets to protest or publicize an issue. We do not plan to react to what is happening on the political agenda today. What we do is locating the political issues within a broader perspective; within the democratization process of Turkey through the EU accession negotiations (Project Coordinator of the Democratization Project, TESEV, Istanbul, 4 January 2007).

In the rhetoric of some of these NGOs, one can find such important themes as establishment of durable peace, restorative justice, truth-telling, apology, and re-establishing trust between the IDPs and the state. For example, when asked what she thought about the Compensation Law, the leader of an NGO stated:

First of all, the law does not investigate how displacement took place, what happened and who instigated it . . . With the village evacuations, it is known who was responsible . . . There is no concern for helping IDPs have peace with the state. We cannot have societal peace, and reach social justice by paying compensation because we can reach these only by [referring to the state] acknowledging mistakes. When we talk to the applicants [applying for compensation], we see that especially in the cases of death, they do not want compensation. They want truth-finding and acknowledgment. There is nothing about this in the [Compensation] Law. There should be restorative justice. How would you have this? By reconciliation (President of TOHAV, Istanbul, September 2006).

Although these NGOs *demand* acceptance of group rights and finding truth and accepting responsibility, they do not necessarily *act for* them. Reconciliation requires closure with the past and the healing of social wounds. Such a process needs to encompass several elements: truth, justice, forgiveness/healing, reparation, trust across the divide in the society, and individual or group security (Kriesberg 2001; Lederach 1998; IDEA 2004). It takes place at different levels and asks for different remedies. NGOs in Turkey also get trapped by only demanding macro changes, such as changing the electoral law, education in Kurdish and regional autonomy; therefore, they limit themselves to political and security issues. Their use of such themes as apology, truth-telling and justice is also one-sided. For many NGOs, the need for apology is stated without a corresponding readiness to forgive and willingness to abandon beliefs about victimization. Truth-finding is requested from the state without necessarily also asking the PKK to come clean. This, of course, can be seen as an outcome of a long history dominated

by state discourse where ‘Kurdish voices’ are not listened to by the ‘Turkish’ public, but such processes can only start if there is willingness on each side.

Until now, the state’s response to internal displacement has been shaped by an approach of providing social assistance many years after displacement; in other words, mainly ‘assisting IDPs.’ On the other hand, NGOs claim that dealing with the issue from a humane perspective also requires accepting that the issue is related to identity rights, returning dignity to these people, healing their pain by understanding and sharing it with them, and helping them express themselves and overcome their traumas by restituting their rights:

The humane side of the issue... Because the state does not acknowledge the pain and trauma these people experienced, it is important to say that ‘I understand your pain and acknowledge it’. These are important factors in strengthening these people’s belief in justice and their belonging to the state. How will these wounds be healed? Not by giving them money (President of TOHAV, Istanbul, September 2006).

Other examples elsewhere indicate the necessity of dealing with such matters as building trust between the ex-combatants and the locals as well as state officials in reconciliation and establishing long-lasting solutions. National political moves in the absence of social and psychological support mechanisms in specific cases, and reconciliatory moves by the conflicting parties in general do not have a chance to endure.

There is also a need to initiate dialogue between the Kurdish IDPs and other groups in the cities to which IDPs migrated. The words of the leader of a civil movement suggest that besides macro changes addressing the root causes of the conflict, developments in the post-1999 period, especially after 2004, when violence escalated once more, point to an area where NGOs could work:

[After 2004] killing on behalf of so-called ‘patriotism’ was justified. I find this more dangerous than that of the earlier period because before, the violent struggle was aimed at a group—the PKK. Now, we see that everyone is being charged [as ‘terrorists’]. They created such a public opinion (Leader of *Hakkâri Mayın İzleme Grubu*, September 2006).

There are not many NGOs in Turkey that aim at undertaking such reconciliatory projects at the local level. It is also only recently that some NGOs have begun to address micro issues, such as dialogue between Kurds and other groups in the society, and only a few of these projects specifically target the IDPs. When a state limits NGOs to service delivery only, and resists acknowledging that displacement is related to the broader conflict, the NGOs’ initial reaction seems to be to try to get the state to do more and accept the latter. That is why most NGOs, rather than trying to form a bridge between these groups, mostly target the state as their addressee. Best practices elsewhere show that the mobilization of IDPs to seek their rights themselves and the formation of regional federations to work with the state

officials to represent their wishes, needs and interests make up the best model for return, development and durable peace (Çelik 2007). Such co-operation, however, requires accepting NGOs as legitimate parties; but at the same time, there is a need for greater willingness and increased capacity of NGOs to undertake such bridging activities by putting somewhat equal distance between the conflicting parties. This is rather a difficult task when IDPs as a cultural group are not politically represented or, even when they are, their representation is not seen legitimate by the other party(ies).

Two more points need to be mentioned regarding the weaknesses of NGOs in bringing the issues of internal displacement into peace processes. Even though they do a good job in speaking on behalf of the IDPs and publicizing their demands, they are trapped by what they criticize: they do not let the IDPs speak for themselves. With the exception of a few public gatherings and a few archival studies, the voices of IDPs are lost.

Lastly, and most importantly, there is still a conflict between the NGOs and IOs in the terminology and understanding of policies needed for IDPs. The NGOs' criticism of the UN shows that the UN's 'expert language,' which refers to the problems of the Kurdish IDPs devoid of their political context, seems 'quite alienating for the non-experts working on the ground with IDPs' (Yükseker and Kurban 2009: 20). Even though the UN adopts an official language and tries to incorporate all actors into the process, NGOs see the UN's work as echoing the Turkish state's discourse and terminology¹³ and oppose such words as 'integration' (Yükseker and Kurban 2009), believing that these resemble the long-lasting state policies of assimilating Kurds. It is with this entrapment in the policy discourse and language that NGOs lose contact with the state and the IOs.

Conclusion

As opposed to a developmentalist approach which treats displacement as part of a development agenda (mostly of a state), a rights-based approach to durable solutions requires that all actors work together to support IDPs and inform them of their rights and the policies concerning them. It requires ensuring the goals of transparency, accountability, capacity development, participation, and non-discrimination/equality (Kälin 2010). From this perspective, in establishing durable solutions and preventing another wave of violence, NGOs become important actors for the representation of the needs and problems of the IDPs, and policies excluding them from the process do not produce long-lasting results (Çelik 2007). IOs, on the other hand, can pressure the state to act in accordance with international norms and bridge the divide between the divergent views represented by the state and NGOs.

Klopp *et al.* argue that 'all too often, displacement and its aftermath are viewed within a humanitarian and security lens that obscures...critical but politically charged aspects of how peace must be built' (2010: 4). It is

important to discuss the different actors' divergent views of what peace means in order to find durable solutions to conflict-induced displacement. Even when an actor sees displacement as purely a developmental issue and approaches it by providing social aid to the IDPs, it is impossible to address it 'without a clear understanding of the political and military motivations involved' (Kenyon Lischer 2007: 144). Therefore, these 'politically charged views' are crucial for establishing durable solutions.

In the Turkish case, the state perceives the conflict-induced displacement solely as a security and development issue, and excludes IDPs and NGOs from the process of addressing the needs and rights of the IDPs; thus, in fact, it has a 'political' agenda of its own. It is this asymmetrical position—that the 'political' is the sphere of the state only—that further politicizes the NGOs. In fact, incorporating the IDPs and their needs and rights into the peace process through such political discourses is important to a certain extent because 'IDPs not only have deep vested interests in peace processes, but often strong opinions about both the issues and the negotiator' (Fagen 2009: 31). Peace is a process and in this process all issues, including those pertaining to internal displacement 'are negotiated in a *politicized* context' (Fagen 2009: 32). Yet, at the same time, there is a tipping point for NGOs for adopting such a political stance and language. In order to open up dialogue channels with the state and the other social sectors in the society, NGOs need to develop skills to work with diverse populations and the state while at the same time representing the needs of the IDPs.

To be able to have a dialogue with the state and negotiate on the issues pertaining to the needs and rights of the IDPs, however, NGOs need certain skills, which they lose sight of in their fight for recognition by the state. Despite their unique knowledge of the situation of IDPs, many NGOs in Turkey do not always raise their concerns efficiently, and fail to develop adequate advocacy messages (IDMC 2006) or form coalitions in different NGO sectors needed to pressure the state. Even though their basic strength is advocacy, they lack 'skills to refer more systematically to international IDP-related standards, policies and practices in their advocacy work, which could reinforce their credibility and strengthen their positions' (IDMC 2006: 5).

States, on the other hand, also need to see these politically charged views as part of a dialogue which can open up possible peace processes. Although it has been a hegemonic actor for a long while, the Turkish state has recently started to show more signs of cooperation with the NGOs and IOs, but issues of transparency and trust still exist as barriers to dialogue. It seems the UN can play a critical role in bridging the differences between the NGOs and the state. However, the involvement of UNDP, rather than another UN branch such as UNHCR, OCHA or OHCHR, in the policies related to internal displacement is a sign that the Turkish state treats this problem as a regional development problem rather than one encompassing issues of group rights. Disconnecting the internal displacement from its political roots, that is, the

Kurdish Question, undermines local peace-building efforts because these issues ‘go beyond the governorship and concern the national government’ (Yükseker and Kurban 2009: 18). Therefore, this artificial separation of the two issues limits both development and peace as remedies for the internal displacement issue.

On the other hand, the EU’s approach to the issue focuses on the protection of the political, cultural, social and economic rights of citizens of different ethnic origins, and its solutions predominantly concern *rights* and *regional development*. Its recommendations can play a complementary role when combined with the recommendations of the UN. The EU’s leverage through Turkey’s candidacy can push the Turkish state to accept group rights while the UN can become more of a third party to bridge the divergent views of the state and NGOs.

Sustainable return and overcoming the legacy of displacement require getting at the root causes of the problem through the involvement of all parties in the conflict. In cases where there are major disagreements on the reasons and consequences of internal displacement, third parties/actors/mediators, problem-solving workshops or community-based approaches initiated mostly by international organizations can produce alternative and holistic solutions. Understanding the nature of conflicting issues and the points of view of the actors can facilitate return and create durable and viable solutions for both returnees and those who prefer to stay. All actors, therefore, need to analyse the linkages between conflict and displacement to produce long-lasting policies for IDPs, initiate a peace process to address their needs and priorities, and deal with the root causes of the conflict that led to displacement as well as confronting its legacy.

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1. There is no agreed definition of ‘peace-building’, which came into widespread use after 1992 when Boutros-Ghali used it in *Agenda for Peace*. The Agenda referred to actions ‘to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict’ (1992: 46). The definition used in this article, like Boutros-Ghali’s, is a broad definition of peace-building, but is not limited to activities in the post-conflict phase only since the definition of ‘post-conflict’ itself is also problematic. Besides this, a post-conflict phase can turn into escalation if roots of the problem are not dealt with.
2. In August 2009, the government initiated a project called the ‘Kurdish Initiative,’ which later came to be referred to as the ‘Democratic Initiative,’ and, lastly, the ‘National Union and Brotherhood Project.’ These changes in name indicate the government’s confusion, and some desperation, in dealing with a complex and deep-rooted problem. As of mid-2011 these attempts to resolve the conflict had

not succeeded in addressing core problems. Consequently the research which forms the basis for this article remains current even though it was undertaken before these discussions started.

3. In September 2011 the Turkish public learned via the internet that the then assistant secretary to the Prime Minister (now the leader of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT)), Hakan Fidan along with the then deputy leader of MIT had talked to the PKK leaders Mustafa Karasu and Sabri Ok (<http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25250212/>). Later in that month, Prime Minister Erdoğan accepted that Mr. Fidan talked to the PKK in the name of the 'state' not of the 'government' (<http://haber.mynet.com/erdogani-zora-sokacak-konusma-591874-guncel/>). Even though this incident came as a shock to some members of the public, some journalists had already reported that the Turkish state had been negotiating with Öcalan since his capture in 1999 (<http://wap.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25125678/>).
4. Here, the choice of the adjective 'coercive' rather than 'strong' in reference to state and political culture should be noted. This stems from the fact that the Turkish state is not strong in its extractive, regulative and distributive powers, but rather is coercive and arbitrary (Kalaycıoğlu 2002). It is this coercion and arbitrariness that one needs to take into account in the study of relations between the state and local NGOs in Turkey (Çelik 2010).
5. International organizations can use various powers to change state behaviour. Rubin, for example, talks about five types of power: reward (being able to offer side-payments), coercive (being able to establish threats and sanctions), expert (having greater knowledge on the conflict issue), referent (power to bring parties to negotiation), and legitimate (having legal rights and sanctions) (cited in Fisher and Keashley 1991).
6. As argued by Çalı, through the supranational human rights litigation of the ECHR, reconstruction of the IDP experiences served an important function of revealing truth and bringing IDP stories before the public (Çalı 2010: 312–318) but failed to make the Turkish state accept any wrongdoing. The fact that, in Kurdish eyes, the Turkish state was unwilling or failed to protect them before and during the conflict and rejected responsibility in the displacement on one hand, while European institutions pressured the Turkish state on the other, unquestionably led Kurdish IDPs to turn to European litigation. Consequently, the strategy of 'going to Europe', as argued by Ayata, 'became Kurds' most effective tool not only to seek justice, but also to signal to the Turkish state that they were not alone and that there was an authority in Europe that even Turkey had to recognize' (2011: 203).
7. Politicization in this context means taking a side either with the state or the PKK. Although there are also politicized village guards taking a side with the state, who were displaced by the PKK, in this study there were no displaced village guard participants. The number of such displaced is low compared to others, and access to their communities is not easy.
8. It is also interesting to note how the terminology of the IDPs and NGOs close to the Kurdish political organizations has changed over time. While in 2006–2007, it was common to hear 'amnesty,' which literally meant 'forgiving' in Turkish, as one of the preconditions for return and peace, it was later replaced by reintegration of PKK members into political life since many believed that using the word amnesty (forgiving) implied that a higher authority (the state) is forgiving them

for what they have done. In fact, these people started asking the question, ‘who is forgiving who?’

9. The concept of ‘human security’ was introduced to the literature through the UN Development Programme’s 1994 *Human Development Report*, and the Commission on Human Security’s 2003 *Human Security Now* report. According to these reports, states should protect their citizens against violent threats to individuals, while recognizing that these threats are strongly associated with poverty, lack of state capacity and various forms of socio-economic and political inequity, hunger, disease and natural disasters.
10. Here, the linguistic rights of the Kurds are a political matter since the Turkish constitution does not allow the use of any language besides Turkish in public institutions, including schools. Although there have been some reforms allowing the use of Kurdish, education in the mother tongue and receiving assistance in Kurdish are still debated issues. Interestingly, this has not been reported by IDPs as a need. This is because local NGOs in these cities already use Kurdish in their service delivery.
11. In 1927, some Kurdish nationalist elites formed the Khoybun (Independence) group, and rose against the Turkish Republic under the leadership of a former Ottoman army officer, İhsan Nuri Pasha, in the area of Ağrı (Ararat) in 1930. İhsan Nuri assembled a small group of men trained in modern weapons and moved them to the Ararat region, where local tribes were already in revolt as a reaction to Turkey’s national homogenization project. However, the Turkish army’s superior weaponry, communications and logistics, and the Kurdish tribes’ lack of coordinated mobilization, led to the state’s success in suppressing the rebellion (McDowall 1997).
12. The restrictiveness of the threshold system applied in the electoral law, which requires a political party to get at least 10 per cent of the national votes, is a major concern, especially for the Kurds. Because the Kurds are highly concentrated in eastern and southeastern Turkey but do not constitute a large minority in Turkey, the votes of the pro-Kurdish party, the BDP, are also concentrated in these regions. Even though the BDP may gain up to 80 per cent of the votes in the east and southeast, it is not always possible for it to pass the national threshold since this area is low in population.
13. In fact, some of such concerns might be well-founded. The Guiding Principles were translated into Turkish by the Ankara branch of UNDP. This official translation expressed ‘displacement’ by ‘*yerinden olma*’, an active concept, which has no indication that displacement was done by someone, despite opposition by the NGOs. These organizations claim that the correct translation should be a passive one, ‘*yerinden edilme*’, indicating that displacement was done by some agency. The choice of the word came through the Turkish state’s pressure that internal displacement happened due to security concerns.

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