

MURCIR Debriefs



Debrief Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2024

Launched in 2021 and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) has already become the flagship event of Turkish diplomacy. The third edition of the ADF, which brought together heads of state and governments, ministers, diplomats, business leaders, academics, youth, and the representatives of non-governmental organisations, think tanks, and the media, took place on 1-3 March 2024 with the theme “Advancing Diplomacy in Times of Turmoil”, in Antalya, Türkiye’s capital of tourism.

ADF 2024 hosted approximately 4700 attendees from 148 countries, including politicians, diplomats, academics, businesspeople, journalists, students, and religious leaders, providing a platform for more than 50 sessions, side meetings, press activities, etc. There were parallel sessions, and attendees could meet in person in different rooms or halls to follow the debates. Various global issues such as conflicts, climate change, food insecurity, refugee crisis, women’s rights, and artificial intelligence were elaborated upon in the Forum. Ongoing wars and conflicts loomed large over all the panels, rounds, talks, and debates in the forum, particularly Gaza.

Intending to broaden participation, the Forum offered different means of participation to its attendees. The panels and talks were broadcast in real-time, so following the forum from afar through the ADF YouTube channel was also possible. While bilateral talks were taking place among the diplomatic representatives, the attendees had the chance to meet and interact during the coffee and lunch breaks. The ADF 2024 sought to act as a platform to address these challenging issues through dialogue and cooperation.

MURCIR Analysis would like to present some assessments of the academicians who participated in the ADF 2024 below.

ADF: Flagship Event of Turkish Diplomacy

Prof. F. Didem Ekinci, *Çankaya University*

As such, Antalya has already become the global hub of diplomacy. The fact that a good number of politicians and diplomats attending the forum were from the non-Western world was absolutely invaluable at a time when ideational and visible barriers have still not been overcome in diplomacy and politics in the multipolar world. Based on that trend, although the discussions on the war in the Middle East and the Russia-Ukraine war obviously stood out in the voluminous ADF 2024 agenda; sessions on other regions, pandemics, space diplomacy, climate change, xenophobia, gender issues, migration, international trade, natural disasters, connectivity, etc. were also thoroughly discussed.



The main question of the forum was “how can we benefit more effectively from diplomacy when responding to current global challenges?”, especially when many people in the world are about to go to polling stations and vote this year, including the two most critical states; i.e., the U.S.A. and Russian Federation. How the majorities in these two states will vote is highly likely to set the background for cooperation or conflict in the foreseeable future. As is the case in many big events like ADF, side meetings and events in the 3-day period can be said to have contributed to future decision-making processes with both the side meeting on mediation regarding Gaza and the separate meeting of academics organised by SAM. The two events functioned as platforms for an exchange of views outside of the regular program. They encouraged new future networks and collaboration, particularly between those academics whose areas of expertise are similar.

The organisation and content of the panels and rounds also deserve mention, not only because the forum treated the non-Western views and participants as equal stakeholders, but also because they had the opportunity to speak up and make their voices heard by all who were interested. The forum also does a good job by inviting POLS and IR students, enabling them to be exposed to the top events in their field in the country, which may positively contribute to their future careers as decision-makers in the field.

As things stand, global politics in our age dictates a multi-stakeholder, strategic, and responsible approach to bring about collective impact for all. That, in the first place, entails formulating new legal codes in global politics. I suggest the future ADF fora address this as the main concept, as the rehabilitation of the international rule-based system is what we all need today. Last, but not least, I'd like to see more academics as speakers in the forum.

ADF: A New Venue For Revitalizing Multilateralism

Dr. R. Funda Karadeniz, *Gaziantep University*

In today's world, despite the competing narratives on the future shape of world order, there is a common view that multilateralism created at the end of World War II is at a crossroads. We are witnessing the debate on multilateralism in the post-Western world around the question of which principles, values, and organisations should determine the international order and thus shape international politics. Russia-Ukraine war, the suffering of humanity in Gaza under Israel's attacks, and the permacrisis of food, energy, and climate change create challenges to existing international institutions, and their ineffectiveness in dealing with these crises led to the questioning of their legitimacy. Therefore the world needs more inclusive informal gatherings to enhance dialogue between actors at all levels to create comprehensive solutions to the current problems and exchange views on future images of world order(s) to shape new multilateralism. In this context, the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) in 2024, held on March 01-03, 2024, has served as a venue where different voices about multilateralism have been heard and reached a wider audience worldwide.

ADFs have become one of the important informal, unique platforms gathering various regional and global actors, political leaders, diplomats, opinionmakers, academics, media, and the youth since 2021. In the opening speech, Turkish Foreign Minister Fidan underlined that 'the platform is not a monotonous forum where the same notes are played with different instruments'. In my opinion, the forum could be evaluated around three main points in this framework. In the first place, panels took the picture of the reality we live in' from various actors' perspectives under the themes of ongoing conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and Syria, the transnational threats of racism, xenophobia, climate change; irregular migration, unforeseen risks of AI, changing practices of diplomacy and current state of international trade and connectivity. Secondly, from Latin America to the Balkans, Europe, and Asia, the panels focused on 'different approaches and experiences of regions' on global and local issues where 'different notes' were heard. Thirdly, the forum gathered different imaginations of the world together by creating an intellectually stimulating atmosphere. In these imaginations, perspectives of the ones whose voices are not heard in the current system, such as the women, the Global South, and the least developed countries, are given special emphasis, making the forum different from other informal gatherings.

Despite the diversity of the opinions expressed in these wide-ranging topics of discussions and speeches of political leaders in the forum, a common need in this transitioning world order is underlined: continuous dialogue between all actors in the system. In the multiplex world order, as described by prominent IR scholar Acharya, in the absence of a global hegemon, middle powers could play initiative leadership roles to enhance



the interaction capacity of the system. In the ADFs, with its diplomatic network power capacity, one of the largest in the world, Ankara has shown its willingness and aim to play an active role in revitalising multilateralism by making bridges between different imaginations of the world through dialogue.

New Perspectives on the World and Diplomacy

Prof. Suna Gülfer İhlamur Öner

Given the growing violations and disregard for international norms, the ADF is becoming even more important each year as it represents a commitment to support the rules-based international order and to use diplomacy in novel forms to better deal with global challenges. The Century of Türkiye exhibition in the Forum was a showcase of Türkiye's more than a century-old role in the international arena and its contributions and commitment to peace, diplomacy, and cooperation.



In almost all the panels and rounds, the panellists expressed grave concerns about the situation in Gaza. Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Hakan Fidan, during his speech at the Forum, stated that Gaza has become a sign of the legitimacy crisis of the international system. In the Forum, there was the "Bulletproof Dreams: Gaza Child Artists Exhibition", which displayed paintings by the children of Gaza. These paintings, which have also been compiled and published as a book, express the loss, pain, and suffering of the children and people in Gaza. The Gaza Contact Group meeting at the Forum analysed the situation and expressed the need for a permanent solution in Gaza. South Africa, which has launched a genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, was represented by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Naledi Pandor. She was one of the panelists of the "Understanding the Global South Panel". In this panel, which was one of the very interesting and important panels of the ADF, the panelists talked about the urgent need for a "just international order", which can be possible with the integration of the Global South perspectives, priorities, and needs into global governance mechanisms and reform of the international organizations. At the panel, Minister Pandor expressed her country's support for the Palestinian people and criticized the Western stance on the situation in Gaza, which is very different from the American and European response to the plight of civilians in Ukraine.

"How to promote a just global order?" was a guiding question that shaped the discussions throughout the Forum. Demand for a just global order and Türkiye's commitment to it was expressed by the President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in his opening speech. At the SAM panel "From Order to Disorder: Historical Insights on the Contemporary Crisis of the International System" four distinguished academics discussed the North-South and West-East

divides and explored how critical perspectives, particularly from the Global South, are necessary to understand and address the global challenges.

The ADF sought to open up more room for new approaches and perspectives emanating mainly from the Global South with panels such as “Realizing the Potential of Africa”, Local Perspectives for Global Issues, “Latin America and the Caribbean in Transformation” and “New Approaches to Empower the Least Developed Countries”. At the Women in Diplomacy Panel on the last day of the Forum, which brought together female Turkish diplomats to share their experiences and talk about the glass ceilings in diplomacy, the General Director of Eastern and Southern Africa in the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Elif ÇomoğluÜlgen, while sharing her experiences in as the Turkish ambassador to South Africa (2017-2021) stated that as she arrived in South Africa she realised that South Africa stood at the starting not endpoint of the African continent. She said many in Türkiye, including her, assumed Egypt to be the starting point of the continent, linked with the historical experience and positioning of Türkiye in the international arena. She reminded the participants of the need to look at Africa, the world, and global issues from different perspectives: North, South, East, and West. The ADF 2024 presented a significant opportunity to grasp the importance of new approaches and different perspectives and connectivity, rules-based multilateral systems, international cooperation, and regional ownership to better address global challenges.

Observation Notes on the ADF 2024

Assoc. Prof. Zuhall Mert Uzuner

The third edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) apprehended again the main target to promote multilateral diplomacy by bringing together politicians, decision-makers, journalists, experts, and bureaucrats from crucial regions and actors around Türkiye. Because of the 2023 February 6 devastating earthquakes, the ADF 2023 could not be held, but it was good to be in the ADF as a prominent part of continuing tacks of diplomacy working in our geography. Because of the sad and shocking developments in Gaza, the ADF talks referred to the continuing tragedy in Palestine. It created a base for focusing on injustice, humanitarian law, the value-based international system, and the role of the Global South. These topics are critical to future debates about the changing international order and peace. Despite the tragedy and crisis in Gaza, continuing to support the humanitarian frame by using every aspect of diplomacy can be considered enough to praise the ADF.

This was my second year attending ADF 2024, and it is not an exaggeration to say that March has been marked as ADF month in many academicians' agendas. As in ADF 2022, guests of ADF 2024 had many opportunities to stimulate cooperation, dialogue, and academic production. It is possible to list contributions to the guests.

First, the ADF offers prominent academicians a platform to gather them to discuss contemporary developments. ADF 2024 has also given particular importance to the academic community under the coordination of SAM (Strategic Research Center) to integrate academicians' potential to foreign policy perspective. The widening spectrum of diplomacy through the participation of many different actors made the contribution of the academic community to the mechanisms much more important, and I am sure the SAM has the potential to carry out this coordination role. Second, the



ADF offers a valuable opportunity to interact with policymakers and widens the opportunity to develop research projects that touch on politics. It inspires most of us to work on new details and prospects in Turkish foreign policy. Additionally, invitation of guest speakers from major regions of Turkish foreign policy creates a fruitful base for academic projects of regional studies in international relations.

Third, ADF 2024 focuses on the usage of diplomacy to tackle global challenges in the current state of affairs through the adoption of a novel understanding of diplomacy. World politics is changing and needs new mechanisms to tackle the existence of many problems at the same time. With its format of gathering heads of state and governments, ministers, diplomats, business leaders, academics, think-tankers, and youth and media representatives, it is a worldwide respected initiative to go beyond its essential and traditional dialogue framework.

Lastly, I would like to propose an interlocking circles-based organisation for the following years, which may give participants a role more than the role of audience and allow producing ideas for academicians and think tankers on a structural basis.

***The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy or position of MURCIR.**

