

## **Civil society rapprochement and high politics stalemate**

### **Mapping the future of Armenian-Turkish relations in the context of the wider Middle East**

**23 and 24 March 2012**

**A workshop at the Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion  
Lancaster University**

Sponsored by the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World (CASAW) and the University of Lancaster

With cooperation from the University of Edinburgh and the Programme of South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX).

Convened by Sossie Kasbarian and Kerem Öktem

# Civil Society rapprochement and high politics stalemate: Mapping the future of Armenian-Turkish relations in the context of the wider Middle East

Friday | 23 March 2012

15.30 – 16.00 | Welcome and introduction to the debate: *Where are we, Beyond Denial?*

Kerem Öktem (University of Oxford)  
Sossie Kasbarian (University of Lancaster)

16.00 – 17.30 | Keynote address

Where do we stand in terms of Armenian and Turkish interactions, after a decade of a cautious coming to terms in some sectors of Turkey's society and changing positions within Armenia and the Diaspora, and in the region?

Cengiz Aktar (Bahçeşehir University Istanbul)  
*in conversation with*  
Susan Pattie (Armenian Institute and University College London)

17.45 – 19.00 | Panel 1 | Different histories: The emerging contested space of memory

This panel seeks to establish the state of the scholarly debate and examines the key historical issues defining the field. Particular attention will be given to the questions of Young Turk and Armenian nationalism, to mass violence and genocide in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as to the politics of denial and recognition in the public sphere and their impact on historiography.

Chair and Discussant: Donald Bloxham (University of Edinburgh)

Uğur Ümit Üngör (Utrecht University)  
*Contested past: The Armenian genocide in Turkish official history and social memory*

Hans-Lukas Kieser (University of Zürich)  
*Iustitia's sword? Denial of crimes against humanity and its prosecution in Switzerland*

20.00 | Workshop Dinner at Lancaster House

## Saturday | 24 March 2012

### 9.00 – 10.30 | Panel 2 | Regional context: Turkey and the region after the Arab Spring

The revolutions in the Arab world, as well as the upheavals in Syria and Iraq have coincided with Turkey's emergence as a regional power. Both Turkey and its regional environment are mutually reshaping each other, creating new conditions for Turkish-Armenian relations. This panel will ask how Turkey's waning European perspective and its turn towards the Arab world will influence its Armenian policy, what impact this will have on Armenian communities in the changing Middle East, and also whether the Armenian – Turkish rapprochement will impact on similar debates in the Arab world.

Chair: Kerem Öktem (University of Oxford)

Vicken Cheterian (CIMERA, Geneva)

*Arab Regards on Turkey: From AKP to the Arab Spring*

Hratch Tchilingirian (University of Cambridge)

*Turkey and Armenians in the Middle East: Inclusive Turkish-Armenian Dialogue?*

Ziya Meral (University of Cambridge)

*Agreement over the Past or the Future: Which one will be the basis of Turkish-Armenian relations?*

### 10.45 – 12.15 | Panel 3 | Between civil society and high politics

Relations between Turks and Armenians are shaped by high politics, by the Armenian and Turkish states, by Armenian Diaspora organisations, quasi-governmental and non-governmental and international organisations. This panel seeks to elucidate the role of different actors in this wide space facilitating or obstructing interactions between Turks and Armenians.

Chair: Armine Ishkanian (London School of Economics)

Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan (Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Armenia)

*Armenian-Turkish relations and civil society*

Burcu Gültekin Punsman (TEPAV Ankara)

*Reflecting on the Two Decades of Bridging the Divide: Taking Stock of Turkish-Armenian Civil Society Activities, TEPAV, January 2012*

Cengiz Aktar (Bahçeşehir University)

*The return of memory*

12.15 – 13.15 | Lunch

**13.15 – 14.45 | Panel 4 | Media, social and cultural movements in the Turkish-Armenian sphere**

The centre of gravity of the emerging new space of scholarly and interpersonal encounters of Armenians and Turks has been firmly rooted in ad-hoc civil society mobilisation. This panel will discuss the trajectories, possibilities and limitations of power emanating from grassroots politics set broadly in the arenas of media, culture and society.

Chair: Sossie Kasbarian (University of Lancaster)

Zafer Yörük (Izmir University of Economics)

*Dynamics of representation of the recent developments in Turkish-Armenian relations in Armenian and Turkish media 2008-2012*

Aris Nalci (International Media Centre, Turkey)

*What did media do in Turkish Armenian normalisation process?*

Laurent Mignon (University of Oxford)

*A Pilgrim's Progress: The Challenges of Armeno-Turkish Literature*

**15.00 – 16.30 | Panel 5 | Intimate, silenced and resurfaced histories**

This panel explores the personal histories of survivors of 1915, of converts and their children and grandchildren, of histories and identities which have been hitherto suppressed by nationalist identity projects.

Chair: Marilyn Booth (University of Edinburgh) tbc

Hovann Simonian (University of Southern California)

*Wishing identity was not an issue: The Hemshin's struggle with ethnicity and history*

Ayşe Gül Altınay (Sabancı University)

*Remembering Islamized Armenian Survivors of 1915: Grandchildren Breaking Taboos, Unravelling Gendered Silences*

Olga Demetriou (PRIO Cyprus)

*'Struck by the Turks': Reflections on the Armenian experience of displacement in Cyprus*

**16.45 – 17.30 | Panel 6 | Concluding discussion**

**Reconnecting the missing pieces: Towards a research agenda of Armenian and Turkish relations in the context of the wider Middle East**

This concluding roundtable will summarise the state of the debate and discuss the future of a scholarly project that intends to close the gap of almost a century of disconnect in interaction as well as academic research.

Theo van Lint (University of Oxford)

Maureen Freely (Warwick University)

Sossie Kasbarian (Lancaster University)

Kerem Öktem (University of Oxford)