

# Türkiye's Role in the Peacebuilding Process of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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## ABSTRACT

Since the end of the Cold War, particularly from the 2000s onward, Türkiye has emerged as an increasingly active actor in humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. Strategically positioned between Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, Türkiye has pursued policies aimed at promoting peace and stability both regionally and globally. This study examines Türkiye's contributions to peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which experienced intense conflict during the 1990s. Using a conceptual framework focused on peacebuilding, the study analyzes Türkiye's efforts in four key sectors: state-building, security-building,

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transitional justice, and post-conflict reconstruction. It explores what Türkiye has done in each of these areas and how it has contributed to the peacebuilding process. Adopting a qualitative research method, the study utilizes primary sources, including official documents related to Türkiye's peacebuilding policies and activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the 1990s. Additionally, secondary sources such as news articles, reports, and academic studies are employed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Türkiye's role and policies. The analysis reveals that Türkiye has made substantial contributions across all four peacebuilding sectors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The findings suggest that Türkiye has largely aligned with international peacebuilding efforts, actively supported them, and pursued an assertive foreign policy to further peace and stability beyond these initiatives.

**Keywords:** Bosnia and Herzegovina; Peacebuilding; Statebuilding; Security-building; Transitional Justice; Post-conflict Reconstruction; Turkish Foreign Policy

## Introduction

Following the Cold War, especially from the 2000s, Türkiye emerged as an active actor in humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. Positioned strategically in Europe, the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, Türkiye has implemented policies aimed at peace and stability both regionally and globally<sup>1</sup> (Özerdem, 2019, p. 470). With this vision, it pursued active foreign policy in over a hundred countries (Haşimi, 2014, p. 129). These policies include mediation in conflicts (Akpınar, 2015; Altunışık & Cuhadar, 2010; Aras, 2012), political entrepreneurship (Akçapar, 2019, 2021), post-conflict reconstruction, disaster response, humanitarian aid, development initiatives (Haşimi, 2014), and strengthening political, economic, and cultural ties with neighboring countries through soft power and public diplomacy. Reflecting its role in global humanitarian policies, Türkiye hosted the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, organized by the UN (Özerdem, 2016, p. 131), where solutions to global challenges were discussed with international organizations, NGOs, scholars, and affected communities (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-a).

In recent decades, one of the prominent goals of Turkish foreign policy has been to emerge as a leading actor in humanitarian diplomacy and aid—not only through diplomatic and mediatory support to conflict-affected regions but also by providing substantial humanitarian and development assistance (Altunışık, 2023, p. 657; TİKA, 2020). Starting its humanitarian efforts in the mid-1980s with food deliveries to crisis areas,<sup>2</sup> Türkiye has since expanded its aid capacity,

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- 1 *Contributing to peace-building efforts in African countries such as Somalia and Sudan or in Asian countries such as Afghanistan and Myanmar and providing development assistance in many countries in Africa are examples of such global activities.*
  - 2 *Examples of Türkiye's humanitarian assistance activities include the 2004 Southeast Asia earthquake, the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, the 2006 humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, the Gaza Crisis that erupted at the end of 2008, the 2010 Haiti and Chile earthquakes and the floods in Pakistan, the 2011 Japan earthquake, the 2013 typhoon in the Philippines, the 2014 floods in the Balkans and the attacks on Gaza, the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the humanitarian crisis in Iraq caused by conflict, the humanitarian crises in Yemen and Libya in 2015 and 2016, and the floods in North Macedonia in 2016. In 2017, Türkiye provided assistance in Colombia and Georgia; in 2018, in Vietnam, Laos, and Indonesia; and in 2019, in Mozambique, Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh,*

becoming a global humanitarian actor. Reaching out to countries affected by natural disasters, war, poverty, and social conflict, Türkiye allocated 0.86% of its gross national income to humanitarian aid in 2021, ranking among the world's most generous countries in aid-to-GNI ratio since 2015. With humanitarian aid amounting to 5.587 billion USD in 2021, Türkiye ranked second globally after the United States (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-a).

Alongside its humanitarian efforts, Türkiye has also emerged as a key contributor to peacebuilding in various regions. It aligns with the international community's peacebuilding model while emphasizing cooperation with local actors and adopting a win-win approach. Türkiye has thus started to develop its own peacebuilding model, moving beyond merely replicating international methods. The liberal peacebuilding model, shaped by Western values post-Cold War, has been criticized for its top-down, standardized approach that often neglects local needs. In contrast, Türkiye's model is tailored to the unique conditions of each country, prioritizing cooperation with local actors rather than applying a one-size-fits-all method, enhancing its effectiveness as a peacebuilding actor.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design to explore the role of Türkiye

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*Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Djibouti, Chad, Ethiopia, Palestine, The Gambia, South Sudan, Georgia, Iraq, Iran, Cameroon, Colombia, Comoros, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Lebanon, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Niger, the Central African Republic, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan, Jordan, and Yemen. In 2020, humanitarian assistance efforts continued in Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Palestine, Fiji, South Sudan, Cambodia, TRNC, North Macedonia, Myanmar, Niger, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Romania, Somalia, Tanzania, Tunisia, Ukraine, Jordan, and Yemen. In 2021, Türkiye extended aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Fiji, Guatemala, South Sudan, Haiti, Croatia, Honduras, Mongolia, Mozambique, Panama, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tajikistan. In 2022, cash and in-kind assistance were provided in response to natural disasters such as floods, wildfires, earthquakes, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions in Afghanistan, Brazil, Iraq, Madagascar, and Pakistan (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-a).*

*As can be observed, Türkiye's humanitarian assistance activities are not confined to its immediate neighborhood; however, Türkiye tends to play a particularly prominent role in humanitarian relief and diplomacy efforts in crises occurring in its surrounding regions. For instance, during the humanitarian crisis in Syria that erupted with the outbreak of civil war in 2011, Türkiye has acted within the framework of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and has emerged as one of the leading actors in cross-border humanitarian aid deliveries to Syria since 2014 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-a).*

in the peacebuilding process of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereafter, Bosnia). Qualitative descriptive research is particularly well-suited for studies that aim to provide a straightforward, data-driven account of events, processes, or actions without extensive theoretical abstraction (Kim et al., 2017; Sandelowski, 2010). Accordingly, the following research questions are addressed: (1) What have been Türkiye's main contributions to the peacebuilding process in Bosnia since the end of the War? (2) How has Türkiye engaged in the four core sectors of peacebuilding in Bosnia? (3) To what extent have Türkiye's peacebuilding efforts aligned with or diverged from broader international peacebuilding frameworks in Bosnia?

The data collection relied on both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include official documents, policy statements, speeches, reports, and press releases from Turkish institutions (such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, TİKA, and the Ministry of Defense), as well as selected documents from Bosnian institutions and relevant international organizations. Secondary sources encompass academic books and articles, policy reports, think-tank publications, and media reports that provide additional context on Türkiye's peacebuilding policies and activities. In addition, two personal communications were conducted in 2025 in Sarajevo with Ali Erdem (legal expert) and Mirsad Karić (expert in Political Science and International Relations), both of whom reside in Bosnia and possess extensive knowledge of Türkiye's Balkan policy and Bosnia-related peacebuilding initiatives. Although these personal communications were limited in number, they provided valuable contextual insights that helped clarify specific aspects of Türkiye's role and complemented the document-based analysis. The collected data were then subjected to descriptive analysis, which yielded a comprehensive and accurate summary of Türkiye's peacebuilding contributions across four key sectors: state-building, security building, transitional justice, and post-conflict reconstruction.

A notable limitation of the study is its heavy reliance on Turkish official documents and Turkish media reports, which may introduce a degree of national framing bias. Despite the incorporation of secondary international and Bosnian sources, as well as the two personal communications conducted in Sarajevo, which provided additional insights, the study still lacks a more extensive inclusion of local Bosnian and international perspectives. Moreover, the article's descriptive approach, while useful for systematically delineating

how Türkiye has contributed to the process of peacebuilding in Bosnia, may result in an absence of critical analysis regarding Ankara's policies.

This study first outlines the conceptual framework of peacebuilding, which gained prominence after the Cold War, explaining its four interrelated dimensions: state-building, security sector reform, transitional justice, and post-conflict reconstruction. It then examines the international community's peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia —a country that endured intense warfare during the Yugoslav disintegration in the 1990s and still struggles for lasting peace—and analyzes Türkiye's contributions to these efforts. In the discussion and conclusion, Türkiye's policies aimed at achieving lasting peace and stability in Bosnia are evaluated, along with potential future policy options that could enhance its role in peacebuilding.

## 1. Post-conflict Peacebuilding

With the end of the Cold War, significant changes in the international system influenced conflict resolution approaches. As interstate wars gave way to internal conflicts, traditional peacekeeping, which focused mainly on ceasefires between warring states, began to be seen as inadequate due to its narrow scope (Call, 2008, p. 1). In response, the peacebuilding approach gained prominence, based on the belief that structural and institutional changes can address the root causes of conflicts and create a sustainable foundation for peace. Unlike mere ceasefire arrangements, this approach aims for broader transformations in conflict-affected countries (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Post-conflict peacebuilding encompasses four interconnected and complementary sectors: 1) State-building, 2) Security building (or security sector reform), 3) Transitional justice, which focuses on justice and social reconciliation after conflict, and 4) Post-conflict reconstruction.

### 1.1. State building

State building, a key pillar of peacebuilding, involves large-scale political and constitutional transformation. Its goals include establishing a transitional government, ensuring democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, restoring state institutions, and implementing constitutional arrangements and free elections to achieve peace and reconciliation (Call & Wyeth, 2008). The process

focuses on an institutional approach, aiming to rebuild state institutions that were largely destroyed during the conflict while considering the conflict's dynamics (Lemay-Hébert, 2020, p. 57).

State building is the process of restoring state authority, which may have been weakened or entirely dismantled due to war or similar causes, to ensure peace and reconciliation within a framework of democratic values and institutions. When state authority collapses, the term “failed state” is often used, although it is sometimes softened to “fragile state” to avoid negative connotations (Lemay-Hébert, 2020, pp. 56–57). This terminology is frequently applied to countries like Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda, which experienced conflicts in the 1990s. In the post-conflict period, effective state building is seen as crucial for achieving peace and stability in such regions.

State building in post-conflict countries is often carried out through international intervention. Although this may seem at odds with principles like democracy, local ownership, and self-governance, post-conflict security and stability are prioritized, leading to the adoption of the “institutionalization before liberalization” approach (Paris, 2004). This approach assumes that international intervention is initially necessary to establish democracy and self-governance, with the expectation that, over time, this need will decrease, allowing the international community to withdraw.

## 1.2. Security Building

Establishing sustainable peace after conflict requires a stable security environment, concentrating on the legitimate use of force within official state institutions, and disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating (DDR) armed groups. This includes restoring security through state channels, regulating national security institutions like the military, police (Davis, 2009; Licklider, 2014), and judiciary (Strohmeyer, 2001), as well as integrating former combatants into formal security institutions or disarming them for civilian reintegration—key components of security sector reform (Kurtenbach & Ansorg, 2022, p. 1362).

Conflicts often leave behind various armed groups that retain power in the post-conflict period, challenging official security forces and hindering normalization. Therefore, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of these groups are crucial components of post-conflict security sector reform (Özerdem, 2008). Highlighted by international organizations, especially

the United Nations, DDR is among the most urgent post-conflict priorities, as the success of peacebuilding sectors like statebuilding, transitional justice, and reconstruction depends on effective security. If the DDR fails, the state's monopoly on violence remains compromised, and the presence of armed groups can lead to a violent oligopoly, risking renewed conflict (Kurtenbach & Ansorg, 2022).

### 1.3. Transitional Justice

Transitional justice in peacebuilding focuses on ensuring post-war justice, addressing human rights violations and war crimes through institutions like international courts, national judicial mechanisms, or truth and reconciliation commissions (Kostić, 2008, p. 205, 2012; Vinjamuri & Boesenecker, 2007). It includes not only judicial measures to hold war criminals accountable but also non-judicial actions such as recognizing victims' rights, providing compensation, and implementing political and social measures to prevent future conflicts. The goal extends beyond prosecution to achieving social reconciliation, reducing polarization, and preventing renewed conflict. Transitional justice encompasses multiple dimensions, including justice, social reconciliation, and healing from conflict-related trauma. Steps like the voluntary return of displaced people to their homes without security fears are also crucial for its realization.

Truth and reconciliation commissions in many post-conflict countries serve as key transitional justice mechanisms, enabling victims and perpetrators to confront each other and helping to heal the divisions and traumas caused by conflict. While legal processes to investigate wartime events and prosecute perpetrators are important, such commissions recognize that political and legal measures alone are insufficient for post-conflict peace and reconciliation. Instead, broader societal truth-telling, forgiveness, and healing are necessary for genuine reconciliation (Huyse, 2003; Rigby, 2001, p. 180; Williams & Scharf, 2002, pp. 16–22). These commissions aim to make perpetrators acknowledge their crimes, apologize, and document victims' experiences, thereby preventing the denial of war crimes—a process that is deeply painful for victims (Aslan, 2014, pp. 287–294; Van Zyl, 2000). The focus is also on encouraging victims' participation in reconciliation, promoting healing without a desire for revenge. Truth and reconciliation commissions provide a platform for victims to voice their grievances, share their stories, and restore their dignity and faith in justice. Notable examples include those established in South Africa and Rwanda (Hayner, 2002).



#### 1.4. Post-Conflict Reconstruction

As seen in nearly all conflicts, war not only claims lives and causes injuries but also devastates a country's economy, infrastructure, and social systems. The inability to restore political, social, and economic stability after conflict heightens the risk of renewed violence (Mason & Meernik, 2009). Therefore, a key focus of post-conflict peacebuilding is the reconstruction process, aimed at rebuilding the physical and socio-economic infrastructure essential for resuming social life (Barakat & Zyck, 2009).

Post-conflict reconstruction primarily involves humanitarian aid and development assistance aimed at repairing the socio-economic and physical damage caused by conflict. This process goes beyond the concept of negative peace, the mere cessation of war and direct violence, and strives toward positive peace, which addresses long-term structural issues like political and social inequalities, lack of infrastructure, and poverty (Galtung, 1969). As Johan Galtung and other peace scholars emphasize, ending direct violence (negative peace) is insufficient for lasting peace; addressing structural violence and systemic inequalities is crucial (Galtung, 1976; Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Lederach, 1997; Özerdem & Roberts, 2016; Roeder & Rothchild, 2005). Humanitarian policies, including economic support, infrastructure rebuilding, and technical assistance, are essential in post-conflict reconstruction, contributing to the realization of positive peace by tackling these deeper structural challenges.

Post-conflict reconstruction, viewed as part of the broader peacebuilding process, is generally defined to include all political, socio-economic, security, and justice-related rebuilding efforts following a ceasefire or peace agreement. For this reason, the terms “post-conflict reconstruction” and “peacebuilding” are often used interchangeably (Özerdem, 2021, p. 347). This overlap illustrates that the various sectors within peacebuilding are not always clearly distinct and are sometimes discussed as synonymous with peacebuilding itself or its dimensions, such as state building, security-building, or transitional justice (Barakat & Zyck, 2009; Özerdem, 2021, pp. 348–349).

## 2. The Process of State building in Post-Conflict Bosnia

The Bosnian War (1992–1995), which claimed around 160,000 lives—mostly Bosniak civilians—and forcibly displaced nearly one million people, ended with the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) in 1995. Officially known as the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia, the agreement not only halted the war but also defined the country's political structure and constitutional order. One of its annexes, the Constitution of Bosnia, established a political system consisting of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (51% of the territory) and the Republika Srpska (49%), along with the special status of the Brčko District (İrdem, 2023, p. 133). These entities were granted extensive powers in social services, education, infrastructure, and policing. While Republika Srpska maintained a largely centralized structure, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into ten cantons, each with significant autonomy over education, health, and justice (Belloni, 2009, p. 359; Ekinci, 2014, pp. 17–18). In contrast, the central state retained limited authority and operated under a consensus-based governance model among the three *constituent peoples* (Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats) (Uygun, 1998).

The highest office in Bosnia, the Presidency, consists of three members representing each of the constituent peoples, with the presidency rotating every eight months. The legislature is bicameral, comprising the House of Representatives and the House of Peoples. Representatives of the three constituents have veto rights on decisions deemed harmful to their vital interests. Although the Constitution ensured peace, it left the country with a highly complex administrative structure, including 14 separate governments and parliaments (state level, two entities, and 10 cantons) (Korkut & Mulalić, 2009, p. 111; Lamba & Hisoğlu Koç, 2022, pp. 77–81). This complexity has hindered the central government's ability to perform basic state functions and created barriers to effective public administration. Since the ceasefire was primarily achieved through international pressure rather than the parties' willingness, there was little expectation of a rapid adoption of strong statehood. Consequently, the peacebuilding process in Bosnia has been closely monitored and actively supported by the international community from the beginning.

The DPA and its subsequent implementation mechanisms transformed international community representatives from mere foreign observers into active participants in Bosnia's state-building process. Following the war, the

Office of the High Representative (OHR) was established to oversee the civilian aspects of the DPA (Office of the High Representative (OHR), n.d.). The Peace Implementation Council (PIC), initially composed of 55 states and international institutions, was later reduced to 11 members. In 1997, during a ministerial meeting in Bonn, the PIC granted the OHR expanded powers—known as the “Bonn Powers”—allowing the High Representative to directly intervene in local politics (Banning, 2014; OHR, n.d.). These powers enabled the OHR to enforce decisions to strengthen state institutions. For example, in 1998, the High Representative unilaterally determined the new flag and coat of arms of Bosnia after parliamentary deadlock. That same year, standardized license plates were mandated, and in 2000, a uniform passport policy was introduced. Through these interventions, several central institutions were established, including the joint tax administration (Bosna i Hercegovina Uprava za indirektno – neizravno oporezivanje, 2025), the state prosecution office (Tužilaštvo Bosne i Hercegovine, 2025), the state court (Sud Bosne i Hercegovine, 2025), and the intelligence agency (Obavještajno-sigurnosna agencija Bosne i Hercegovine (OSA BiH), 2025). In 2006, international pressure led to the unification of Bosnia’s armed forces (Oružane snage Bosne i Hercegovine, 2025). Despite these efforts to centralize and strengthen the state, the country’s ethnically divided political structure continued to hinder the development of an effective government mechanism.

## 2.1. Türkiye’s Role in State building

On February 6, 1992, Türkiye decided to recognize the breakaway republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia. Although Türkiye closely followed Yugoslavia’s dissolution alongside international actors like the US and the European Community (EC), it recognized Bosnia’s independence before both the US and the EC, even before the results of the independence referendum (Kodal, 2018; Sönmezoğlu, 2016, pp. 211–215). This decision was warmly welcomed in Bosnia, and President Alija Izetbegovic expressed gratitude to Türkiye and the Turkish nation (Kodal, 2018, p. 435). Diplomatic relations soon followed, and on March 10, 1993, Şükrü Tufan became the first Turkish Ambassador to Bosnia. On March 19, 1993, Hayrudin Somun, Senior Advisor to Izetbegovic, was appointed as Bosnia’s first Ambassador to Ankara. During his meeting with Ambassador Somun, Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Çetin criticized the global indecision on Bosnia, stating it prolonged the massacres (Kodal, 2018, p. 437). Thus, Türkiye began supporting Bosnia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity during the war,

continuing its support in the post-war state-building process.

Since the beginning of the Bosnian War, Türkiye has firmly supported the independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia, pursuing active diplomatic efforts in this direction. The Ankara administration backed international initiatives to ensure security, stability, and peaceful conflict resolution in Bosnia (İrdem, 2023, p. 131). Türkiye actively supported Bosnia's UN membership, believing it would legitimize the Sarajevo administration and deter Serb attacks (Sönmezoğlu, 2016, p. 216). Although Bosnia became a UN member on May 22, 1992, this did not stop the Serb assaults.

Since the beginning of the war, Türkiye has played a significant role in bringing the issue to the attention of international organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Council of Europe. It also initiated diplomatic efforts under the UN and sought to mobilize the Islamic world through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) regarding the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia (Sönmezoğlu, 2016, p. 216). In this context, the OIC meeting held on June 17–18, 1992, at Türkiye's request, heightened international awareness of the war in Bosnia. The Istanbul meeting in November 1992, led by Türkiye, along with various diplomatic initiatives, fostered international dialogue against the risk of the war's expansion. Türkiye also worked to influence global opinion to lift the arms embargo that left Bosniaks defenseless and emerged as a key actor in NATO's decision to launch an air campaign against Serb forces (Sönmezoğlu, 2016, p. 217).

The US sought cooperation with Ankara to leverage Türkiye's close relations with the Bosnian leadership. During this process, many high-level officials, including US National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and Richard Holbrooke, one of the architects of the DPA, maintained close contact with Ankara (Demirtaş Coşkun, 2007, pp. 65–71). Türkiye's active diplomatic role during the Bosnian crisis continued in the post-Dayton state-building mechanisms, where it became a member of the PIC Board of Directors, representing the OIC (İrdem, 2023, p. 136).

After the war, Türkiye continued its active diplomatic efforts to ensure Bosnia's political stability, extending its role beyond the PIC. Türkiye's peacebuilding efforts include supporting dialogue among Bosnia's constituent nations and promoting regional normalization with neighboring countries. In domestic

politics, Türkiye seeks to play a constructive and balanced role among the three founding nations,<sup>3</sup> leveraging its respected status to facilitate dialogue during political crises (Strategic Thinking Institute, 2021). For instance, in 2021, amid rising tensions, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan engaged in effective diplomacy by meeting first with Bosniak leader Bakir Izetbegovic and then with Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik a week later (TRT Avaz, 2021). In 2025, when Milorad Dodik was sentenced to one year in prison and a six-year political ban by Bosnia's judicial authorities for defying OHR decisions, Türkiye again intervened. Erdoğan contacted Bosnian representatives, affirming Türkiye's support for Bosnia's territorial integrity and constitutional order. Maintaining a balanced stance, Türkiye also reached out to Dodik, cautioning against escalating the crisis (Anadolu Agency, 2025a, 2025b).

Alongside its mediation efforts within Bosnia, Türkiye has also acted as a mediator between Bosnia and its neighbors, Serbia and Croatia. A key initiative in this regard was the Türkiye-Bosnia-Serbia trilateral dialogue mechanism, launched in October 2009. This mechanism aimed not only to normalize relations among the three countries but also to enhance regional peace and stability (Ekinci, 2019, p. 39). In the first five months, foreign ministers met five times in Istanbul, Belgrade, and Sarajevo, intensifying diplomatic engagement. These meetings led to concrete steps, including Serbia's parliamentary declaration condemning the 'Srebrenica massacre' and the opening of Bosnia's embassy in Belgrade (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.-b). Türkiye's regional diplomacy significantly contributed to the peacebuilding process by improving relations between Bosnia and its neighbors. The trilateral mechanism also provided Bosnia with a platform to address unresolved post-war issues, helping to ease domestic political crises and accelerate decision-making processes.<sup>4</sup>

Türkiye's support for the peacebuilding process has gradually expanded through diplomatic initiatives and regional economic and infrastructure cooperation. Within the trilateral mechanism between Bosnia and Serbia, Türkiye has taken concrete steps to strengthen trade and economic relations, particularly

3 Personal communication with Ali Erdem, [Legal expert], Sarajevo, March 24, 2025.

4 Personal communication with Prof. Dr. Mirsad Karić, [Expert in Political Science and International Relations, International University of Sarajevo], Sarajevo, 27 March 2025.

focusing on infrastructure projects since the 2010s. Notably, highway projects connecting Bosnia and Serbia were seen as crucial for enhancing regional economic cooperation and sustaining peace (DEİK, 2016; Kaplan & Gül, 2019). At the 2016 Türkiye-Bosnia-Serbia trilateral summit and subsequent meetings, the importance of economic integration in the region was highlighted, with meetings also held in the Türkiye-Bosnia-Croatia trilateral format until the last summit in June 2024 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, 2024a). Türkiye's successful implementation of two separate dialogue mechanisms involving Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia has earned it international recognition as an effective mediator in the Balkans (Ekinci, 2019, p. 39).

### **3. Security Building in Post-Conflict Bosnia**

During the Bosnian War, NATO played a crucial role in military operations, enforcing international sanctions, monitoring the UN-designated no-fly zone, and supporting peace efforts. NATO's involvement began in 1992 with monitoring operations in the Adriatic Sea to enforce the UN arms embargo and sanctions on former Yugoslavia (Mueller, 2000, p. 18). Following UNSC Resolution 749 on April 7, 1992, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was deployed to Bosnia. On April 12, 1993, NATO launched Operation Deny Flight, establishing a no-fly zone over Bosnia and monitoring its enforcement. NATO also provided air support to UNPROFOR and carried out limited operations to protect UN-designated safe zones. The most impactful intervention was Operation Deliberate Force, launched on August 30, 1995—a 16-day intensive bombing campaign targeting Bosnian Serb forces. This operation shifted the war's dynamics, pressuring Bosnian Serb leaders into peace negotiations and paving the way for the DPA (Owen, 2000). NATO's intervention marked the beginning of efforts to end the war and build security infrastructure in Bosnia.

Immediately after the war, NATO established a 60,000-strong international peacekeeping force called the Implementation Force (IFOR) under UNPROFOR's authority. IFOR's mission was to implement the military provisions of the DPA, withdraw heavy weapons from front lines, and monitor the ceasefire. A year later, NATO transitioned to the Stabilization Force (SFOR), which served from 1996 to 2004 to maintain long-term stability in Bosnia (Keil & Kudlenko, 2015). Initially deployed with 31,000 troops, SFOR's presence was reduced to 7,000 by 2004 as security improved. Beyond preventing renewed conflict, SFOR supported justice by assisting in the arrest of war criminals, handing them over to The Hague

to uphold the rule of law. In December 2004, NATO ended its peacekeeping mission and transferred security responsibilities to the European Union, leading to the launch of Operation EUFOR Althea with 7,000 troops ("European Union Force in BiH," 2024). Although troop numbers decreased over time, they were periodically increased based on political dynamics, such as the addition of 400 troops in February 2025 due to rising tensions (klix, 2025). Althea remains one of the EU's largest and longest-running military operations, focused on enhancing Bosnia's defense capacity and maintaining security. However, NATO maintains a presence through its Sarajevo headquarters, advising on defense reforms and supporting local authorities in counterterrorism efforts.

The UN played a key role in the civilian aspects of security and security sector reforms in Bosnia by establishing the International Police Force (IPTF) under the DPA framework. Following a UNSC decision in December 1995, the UN Police Task Force and the UN Office for Civil Affairs (UNMIBH) were deployed, with nearly 2,000 international police officers overseeing the supervision, training, and restructuring of local police from 1996 to 2002. During this period, the IPTF implemented key reforms, including removing former combatants from the police force, creating ethnically mixed police units, and promoting human rights-focused policing standards. After the UN mission ended in December 2002, the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) took over, advising local law enforcement on combating organized crime and corruption while supporting civilian capacity development in the security sector until 2012 (Sweeney, 2018).

The international community played a crucial role in restructuring Bosnia's military and defense institutions. Supported by NATO and the OHR, the two entities' separate armies were abolished in 2005, unifying all military forces under the Ministry of Defence to create a single armed force under national sovereignty. This reform was complemented by DDR programs to reintegrate former soldiers into society. Police reform was another significant aspect of security sector restructuring. Although the EU insisted in the mid-2000s that Bosnia reorganize its police across entity and canton lines to progress toward EU membership, resistance from Republika Srpska limited the process. Despite this, international pressure led to the creation of new state-level institutions like the Border Police, the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), and the Intelligence Agency (OSA), establishing common structures in the security sector. This coordinated support from NATO, the UN, and the EU contributed

to security and paved the way for Bosnia's integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

### 3.1. Türkiye's Contributions to Security Building

Türkiye has been an active contributor to peace and security in Bosnia since the war (Sönmezoglu, 2016, p. 217). During the conflict, Türkiye supported UN- and NATO-led military forces with its Naval and Air Forces. It participated in the air force established to enforce the UN Security Council's March 31, 1993, decision to impose a no-fly zone over Bosnia, contributing 18 F-16 aircraft. Additionally, Türkiye took part in NATO's Operation Sharp Guard under the UN Peacekeeping Operation from 1992 to 1996 with 18 frigates, two submarines, four fuel vessels, and 5,000 personnel (İrdem, 2023, p. 131).

After the war, the Turkish Armed Forces contributed to the military dimension of the peace process by actively participating in NATO-led IFOR and SFOR missions in Bosnia. When NATO transferred its mission to the EU-led EUFOR Althea operation in 2004, Türkiye became its second-largest contributor (Land Forces Command, n.d.). Turkish military personnel served in key roles at EUFOR headquarters, deployed liaison and observation teams across Bosnia, and operated a maneuver company within the international battalion. These units were crucial in monitoring security, clearing mines, and maintaining public order. Türkiye also supported security sector reform in Bosnia by contributing personnel to the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) from 2003 to 2012 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, 2025). Furthermore, Türkiye leveraged its influence within NATO to advocate for Bosnia's NATO Membership Action Plan, resulting in its inclusion in 2010.<sup>5</sup> These efforts highlight Türkiye's long-term and multidimensional role in strengthening Bosnia's security capacity, sustaining peace, and advancing its integration into the Euro-Atlantic security framework.

Türkiye has made significant contributions to the modernization and operational capacity of the Armed Forces of Bosnia through training, logistical, and technical support (Anadolu Agency, 2014). In 2021, a Military Financial Cooperation Agreement and a Cash Aid Implementation Protocol were signed between the defense ministries of both countries (Ministry of National

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5      *Personal communication with Prof. Dr. Mirsad Karić, [Expert in Political Science and International Relations, International University of Sarajevo], Sarajevo, 27 March 2025.*



Defense, 2021), followed by a Security Cooperation Agreement in 2022 (Ministry of Interior, 2022). Türkiye's support extends beyond military training to defense industry cooperation. A notable example is the agreement signed in December 2022 between Bosnia's Ministry of Defense and Türkiye's defense company ASFAT. This agreement includes logistical support for M113 armored personnel carriers and M60A3 tanks, providing spare parts, maintenance services, and training for Bosnian military personnel ("Turkish Defense Industry's Hand in the Armored Armor of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Army," 2022). Additionally, Kirpi II armored vehicles are expected to be delivered to Bosnia in 2025, and the Ministry of Defense announced the purchase of six Bayraktar TB2 drones from Türkiye (Özdemir, 2024). These developments highlight Türkiye's commitment to strengthening Bosnia and Herzegovina's defense capacity and contributing to regional stability and security sector sustainability (Emiñn & Ekiñciñ, 2024).

#### **4. Transitional Justice in Post- Conflict Bosnia**

The fourth annex of the DPA, which established the Constitution of Bosnia, incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and its additional protocols as directly binding elements of Bosnian law, granting them supremacy over all national legislation. Article 6 of the Constitution outlines the composition of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and the selection of its members: four are nominated by the Assembly of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia, two by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, and three are appointed by the President of the European Court of Human Rights. This structure highlights the international community's direct influence on Bosnia's constitutional and legal framework.

Established in 1993 by a UN Security Council resolution, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) played a crucial role in promoting transitional justice in Bosnia. The ICTY's mission was to ensure justice and foster reconciliation by prosecuting genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed throughout the former Yugoslavia, including Bosnia (ICTY, 2001). Its goal was to prevent collective blame and revenge by establishing individual criminal responsibility and giving voice to war victims through an international judicial mechanism. The tribunal brought senior military and political leaders to justice, focusing on major war crimes like the Srebrenica Genocide and the Siege of Sarajevo. In 2017, the ICTY concluded its mandate

and transferred its responsibilities to the International Residual Mechanism of Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT), having indicted 161 individuals and secured 91 convictions (Cazzoli, 2023).

Alongside international judicial mechanisms, strengthening the domestic justice system has been another crucial aspect of transitional justice. In 2005, the War Crimes Chamber was established within the State Court of Bosnia to handle mid-level cases transferred from the ICTY and new domestic investigations. Initially, the court operated as a mixed structure with international judges and prosecutors trying serious war crimes, while local courts in the two entities and Brčko District handled lower-level cases. As the capacity of the local judiciary grew, the number of war crimes trials significantly increased. From 2005 to 2022, the State Court alone convicted 326 individuals of war crimes, resulting in a total of 3,475 years of imprisonment (Cazzoli, 2023).

While the DPA established political institutions and electoral mechanisms after the war, it did not provide a comprehensive framework for transitional justice, leaving truth-seeking and reparations for victims incomplete. Unlike South Africa or Latin America, Bosnia did not implement a formal truth commission process; instead, reconciliation efforts were limited to civil society initiatives and internationally supported projects. Consequently, justice mechanisms have not fully healed the war's wounds, and debates over these issues persist. The ongoing political and legal disputes over the Srebrenica Genocide exemplify the incomplete nature of transitional justice in Bosnia.

In 2004, under international pressure, the Republika Srpska government established the Srebrenica Commission, which published a report acknowledging serious violations of international humanitarian law in Srebrenica in July 1995. The government expressed condolences to the victims' families and committed to bringing war criminals to justice. However, in 2018, the Republika Srpska government repealed the report during a special session and announced plans to create an independent international commission to investigate all disappearances between 1992 and 1995. This denial escalated into a crisis in 2021 when High Representative Valentin Inzko introduced a law criminalizing genocide denial, mandating a minimum three-year prison sentence for those glorifying individuals convicted of crimes against humanity. Serbian political authorities strongly rejected the law, deeming it legally invalid (Crnovrsanin, 2021). On 23 May 2024, the UN General Assembly declared 11 July as the "Day

of Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide”, further deepening the political polarization. The resolution condemned genocide denial and the glorification of war criminals, emphasizing the need to continue identifying victims and prosecuting those responsible (United Nations, 2024). Although intended to raise awareness and promote education about the genocide, these initiatives sparked intense debates among local political actors, highlighting the fragility of the peace process. The lack of consensus on sensitive war issues, such as Srebrenica, underscores the unfinished nature of transitional justice in Bosnia.

#### **4.1. Türkiye's Contribution to Transitional Justice in Bosnia**

Türkiye has been a strong supporter of international efforts to achieve transitional justice in Bosnia. In 1998, Türkiye co-sponsored a UNSC draft resolution urging all parties to cooperate with the ICTY to prosecute war crimes in Bosnia and advocated for expanding the court's jurisdiction to accelerate justice processes (United Nations, 1998). Türkiye's support continued under the ICTY's successor, the International Residual Mechanism of Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). Additionally, Türkiye co-sponsored a draft resolution at the UN General Assembly on May 23, 2024, to designate July 11 as the “International Day of Reflection and Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide.” Following this, a Presidential Decree officially declared July 11 as the International Day of Reflection and Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide in Türkiye (Official Gazette, 2024).

Türkiye has maintained a clear stance on the apprehension of war criminals and cooperation with international courts. In 2008, it welcomed Serbia's arrest of Radovan Karadžić, emphasizing that it would contribute to justice in Bosnia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, 2008). Ankara also viewed the 2021 ratification of Ratko Mladic's life sentence for genocide and crimes against humanity, initially given in 2017, as a positive step for justice (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, 2021). Türkiye has consistently supported the prosecution of war criminals, advocating that transitional justice should also promote reconciliation among Bosnia's constituent peoples. The Türkiye-Bosnia-Serbia Trilateral Summit, mentioned earlier, is a concrete example of Türkiye's diplomatic initiatives in this regard. A significant outcome of the summit was the Serbian Parliament's adoption of a resolution officially condemning the “massacre in Srebrenica” (Cvetković & Martinović, 2010).

## 5. Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Bosnia

Beyond the loss of life, ethnic cleansing, and forced displacement, the Bosnian War caused significant damage to the country's infrastructure, industrial capacity, and economic functioning. Consequently, reconstruction and development became crucial pillars of the post-war peacebuilding process. The international community provided substantial financial and technical support for economic recovery and infrastructure rebuilding, with the World Bank and the EU playing major roles.

Between 1996 and 2002, the World Bank allocated over \$1 billion through its International Development Administration (IDA), financing 45 projects aimed at repairing transport infrastructure, restoring power plants and transmission lines, upgrading water and sewage systems, and revitalizing agriculture and forestry. The EU invested more than €3.5 billion from 1996 to 2021 to support reconstruction and Bosnia's EU integration process (European External Action Service, 2021). Besides infrastructure reconstruction, the EU's support focused on public administration reforms, the rule of law, and structural transformations to promote the transition to a market economy.

The United States, primarily through USAID, has implemented extensive development projects in Bosnia, providing a total of \$2 billion in assistance since 1992. Under the PRO-Future program, peacebuilding activities were conducted in 75 municipalities to strengthen civil society and boost political participation, with a particular focus on encouraging women's involvement in local governments. In economic development, the WHAM Project supported the integration of SMEs into regional and EU markets, while the Diaspora Invest program generated \$9 million in new investments and created 40 jobs. In the fields of education and social services, over 120,000 students received training in democracy and human rights. Media support initiatives included investigative journalism projects aimed at combating corruption (United States Department of State, 2021).

The international community's development strategies enabled Bosnia to achieve greater economic and political independence in the 2010s and make notable progress toward EU membership. However, the country still lags its regional neighbors in terms of per capita income and investment climate, remaining reliant on long-term international support. The EU has allocated significant funds to Bosnia through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), investing €552.1 million between 2014 and 2020. These funds targeted various sectors, including €9.1 million for the Civil Society Facility, €10 million for

the Regional Housing Program, and €51 million for special measures, particularly after the 2014 floods (European Commission, 2024).

### **5.1. Türkiye's Role in Post-Conflict Reconstruction**

Türkiye, a leading global actor in foreign aid and development assistance, has made significant efforts toward the post-war development of Bosnia, which declared independence during Yugoslavia's disintegration and subsequently endured a brutal war. Türkiye played a vital role in the country's reconstruction and development, undertaking various projects in education, health, agriculture, and infrastructure. One of the key institutions in this process was TİKA. Since establishing its Program Coordination Office in Sarajevo in 1995, TİKA has implemented over a thousand projects in Bosnia, covering areas such as education, production, health, housing, agriculture, capacity building, development, and the preservation of cultural heritage (TİKA, 2024).

In the field of education, Türkiye supported the improvement of physical and technological infrastructure in schools, built modern educational institutions, and enhanced teacher professional development. Through the "Turkey-Balkans Experience Sharing in Special Education" project, the standards of eight special education schools were elevated, promoting the social integration of students with special needs.

In rural development, agriculture and animal husbandry projects were implemented to economically empower families returning home after the war. Launched in 2017, the "Food and Life Support Program" provided agricultural equipment and production support to nearly 1,000 families. To encourage women's participation in production, the "Organic Walnut Farming Project" was introduced, along with donations of agricultural machinery to cultivate foundation lands in Eastern Bosnia. To boost employment, Türkiye supported the Gradačac Vocational Training Center, established in 2018 in cooperation with UNDP and the Gradačac Municipality, to train skilled labor for the automotive industry and offer computer courses. In the health sector, hospitals and health centers were modernized, and medical equipment was provided, enhancing the quality of health services. Türkiye's development projects in Bosnia went beyond humanitarian aid, directly contributing to the country's long-term economic and institutional capacity building. These efforts were well-regarded by the international community, with then-High Representative Valentin Inzko praising TİKA's development work as a source of stability in the Balkans (Crnovrsanin, 2020).

Türkiye has undertaken significant projects in Bosnia to protect and restore cultural heritage damaged during the war, with TİKA playing a key role in reconstructing Ottoman-era historical monuments. Notably, the 16th-century Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka, destroyed in 1993, was restored by TİKA and reopened for worship in 2016. Türkiye's cultural heritage preservation efforts were not limited to Ottoman-era monuments but also included projects reflecting the country's multicultural and multi-religious heritage. For example, TİKA restored the tombstone of Zeki Efendi—an important figure in Jewish-Muslim cooperation during the Ottoman period—featuring inscriptions in Ottoman, Hebrew, and Bosnian. Additionally, Türkiye supported initiatives to preserve Bosnia's multicultural identity, including sponsoring the “Coexistence of Jews and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina” conference held in Sarajevo.

Türkiye's influence in Bosnia extends beyond culture into trade, investment, and human resource development, contributing significantly to the country's economic growth. The Free Trade Agreement, effective since July 2003, has been pivotal in boosting economic relations, particularly with the abolition of customs duties in 2007, which substantially increased trade volume. Türkiye's exports to Bosnia, which accounted for only 0.06% of its total imports in 2000, rose to 4.6% by 2007, with some fluctuations in the following years. Similarly, Bosnia's exports to Türkiye grew from 1.5% in 2010–2011 to 3.95% in 2015 and 4.26% in 2016, before dropping to 2.5% by 2019. According to the Central Bank of Bosnia, Türkiye ranked 11th among the top investors in the country, with direct investments of 210.8 million euros from 1994 to 2018, representing 3% of total foreign direct investments. However, the total economic contribution of Turkish companies and institutions is estimated to exceed 1 billion euros (Saraybosna Büyükelçiliği Ticaret Müşavirliği, 2024).

## Conclusion

Türkiye plays an active role in all sectors of peacebuilding in Bosnia, including state-building, security-building, transitional justice, and post-conflict reconstruction. While supporting international peacebuilding efforts, Türkiye also leverages its close political, cultural, and humanitarian ties with Bosnia—rooted in historical connections—to promote peace and stability. Operating on principles of inclusivity and regional/local ownership, Türkiye's peacebuilding approach is based on dialogue, cooperation, and consensus with local actors, resembling its “African solutions to African problems” strategy for Africa (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024b, pp. 15–16). Rather than

imposing solutions, Türkiye collaborates with local stakeholders to shape peacebuilding, stability, and development based on their needs. Türkiye's ability to engage with all three major communities—Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats—and its reputation as a trusted and respected actor enhance its influence in mediation and peacebuilding. Its role as a mediator during political tensions and its active involvement in resolving crises by engaging with all parties underscore Türkiye's unique position in Bosnia.

One of Bosnia's major post-war challenges is the recurrence of political crises, particularly the separatist policies of the Republika Srpska administration that contradict the state structure and constitutional order established by the DPA. The persistence of such crises nearly 30 years after the war suggests that the international community's peacebuilding process has not fully achieved lasting peace and stability. Türkiye, actively participating alongside the international community in peacebuilding efforts, contributes to Bosnia's political, diplomatic, military, economic, and cultural stability. Its acceptance as a respected actor by all three constituent communities—Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats—and its good relations with Serbia and Croatia enhance Ankara's role as an effective mediator in Bosnia's ethnic and political disputes.

Despite Türkiye's constructive approach, the core issue lies in the political structure established by the DPA, which grants Republika Srpska extensive powers, creating a complex political system that hinders Bosnia's functioning as a unified state. While the DPA successfully halted armed conflict, it left many of the country's underlying issues frozen and unresolved, providing separatist leaders like Milorad Dodik with substantial political leverage. For effective peacebuilding, reforming the political system established by the DPA needs to be prioritized. Should these reforms come to the agenda, Türkiye is expected to act as a constructive facilitator, supporting dialogue and reconciliation among the parties to promote long-term stability.

In post-war Bosnia, alongside political crises like the separatist policies of the Republika Srpska administration and unresolved ethnic tensions, various socio-economic problems also remain unaddressed. These include significant population decline, limited employment opportunities, high unemployment, and an inefficient public bureaucracy. Although often overshadowed by political crises, these issues pose substantial barriers to the country's development and progress (İrdem, 2023, p. 140). According to the 1991 census, Bosnia had a population of 4.37 million, but the 2013 census recorded a drop to 3.53 million. Experts estimate that due to high emigration rates, the current population is

even lower than the 2013 figures (Karcic, 2022). Unemployment remains another major socio-economic challenge. Despite a downward trend in recent years, it continues to be a critical issue awaiting resolution (Saraybosna Büyükelçiliği Ticaret Müşavirliği, 2024).

Türkiye's expanding economic relations with Bosnia, along with its development support through institutions like TİKA, contribute significantly to addressing these socio-economic challenges and fostering peace and stability. This illustrates that Türkiye's peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia extend beyond high-level political crises to include solutions to socio-economic issues—often considered “low politics”—such as unemployment and population decline. Through its multidimensional peacebuilding approach, Türkiye plays an effective role in addressing these critical socio-economic challenges.

For Türkiye to play a more effective role in the peacebuilding process in Bosnia, several constructive policy recommendations can be proposed to deepen its qualitative contributions. Firstly, Türkiye's most stable and concrete contributions so far have been achieved by aligning with international institutions and carefully considering regional and global balances. This strategic alignment not only positions Türkiye as a reliable partner in multilateral platforms but also grants its interventions legitimacy at the local level. Therefore, maintaining this pluralistic sensitivity in future policies is crucial. Additionally, Türkiye's constructive diplomatic relations with Serbia and Croatia contribute indirectly but significantly to Bosnia's political stability. Institutionalizing these relations into multilateral cooperation mechanisms could enhance regional reconciliation processes and further solidify Türkiye's role in peacebuilding. The success of such an approach requires inclusiveness and balance, considering the historical fragilities and political sensitivities of the region. Türkiye's diplomatic experience, historical and cultural ties with the region, and multi-layered relationships with local actors indicate strong potential for managing this process effectively. Thus, Türkiye's capacity to position itself as a more influential peacebuilding actor depends on sustaining this strategic, multi-level cooperation within an institutional framework.

In conclusion, regardless of how much effort Türkiye or other international actors invest in peacebuilding in Bosnia, lasting peace and stability ultimately depend on the attitudes and policies of the country's internal actors. Türkiye plays a facilitating role in effective peacebuilding with its institutional and diplomatic capacity and historical experience. However, it is unrealistic to expect Türkiye or any other external actor to establish peace in Bosnia without



the commitment of its internal stakeholders. In the state-building process, it is crucial for Bosnia's authorities to chart their own course based on models that suit their needs and preferences, demonstrating determination in this path. Türkiye's responsibility as a key regional power is to encourage and support local actors towards peace and stability, mediate in resolving disputes, and help in political, military, economic, and socio-cultural areas. However, the primary agents of Bosnia's peaceful future are its own people. Türkiye's approach reflects an understanding that the solution lies with Bosnia's internal actors. By acting with respect for the country's sovereignty and avoiding top-down impositions, Türkiye contributes to the peacebuilding process in a manner that supports local ownership and sustainable peace.

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### **Ethics Statement**

This study involving human participants was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Karabük University Social and Humanities Research Ethics Board, under the protocol number 2025/05(79), dated 30 May 2025. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to this work.

### **Author Contributions**

Both authors are equally responsible for the conception, data collection, analysis, and writing of the manuscript.

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