

LIBRARY OF RESISTANCE/DIVERGING ROADS OF HISTORY

Turkey's Authoritarian Decade After Gezi

Curators: Nil Mutluer and Murat Özbek

In May and June 2013, two roads leading to Turkey's future diverged.

One of them was the road that embraced Turkey's ideational, religious, ethnic and gender diversity in all its different colors and promised to lead them to a pluralist, egalitarian, libertarian, and peaceful democracy premised on respect for human rights.

The other was the road that dragged Turkey to become one of the most 'ruthless' examples of populist authoritarian regimes, of which many examples were to mushroom in the world in the years that followed, from Trump's America to Putin's Russia, from Bolsonaro's Brazil to Orban's Hungary, from Morawiecki's Poland to Meloni's Italy.

The first road to democracy was opened with the cry for freedom that arose from Gezi. What brutally suppressed that cry and dragged Turkey into the dark swamp of a mafia-like, corrupt and violent authoritarianism, was Erdogan's populist tyranny.

Today, after 10 dark years in the swamp of populist authoritarianism, Turkey is once again at a historic juncture: The May 14, 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections will either reopen the road to democracy that was first opened 10 years ago in Gezi, or Erdoğan's tyranny will succeed in closing that road for good. Once again, Turkey will either turn in the direction of democracy or sink further into the dark swamp of populist authoritarianism.

So how come that Turkey, where ten years ago Gezi paved a clear pathway to a pluralistic democracy, finds itself ten years later struggling to emerge from the dark swamp of populist authoritarianism? What social ruptures, conflicts, and political calamities have Turkey's peoples gone through in those ten years to reach a historic crossroads that once again diverges between darkness and light? In the May 14, 2023 elections, which of these diverging roads will Turkey take? And what lessons can human rights defenders across the world who struggle for democracy and resist populist authoritarianism learn from Turkey's decades-long teetering between tyranny and democracy?

Based on what happened in Gezi and its aftermath in Turkey, "Library of Resistance," and "Diverging Roads of History" exhibitions, the installation 'Sounds of Gezi' and "living book," and panel discussion events, all to be organized within the framework of GEZI: 10 YEARS AFTER, will invite participants to read, listen, talk, discuss and think about the future of democracy and authoritarianism in Turkey and the world.

'Library of Resistance' is a collection of over 200 printed works (books, articles, albums, etc.) that should be required reading for those who want to understand Gezi and Turkey's authoritarian decade after Gezi. (In Gorke-Kiosk)

'Divergent Roads of History' is a visual and thematic chronology that will take visitors to a circular journey in time starting and ending at the Gezi Library, in other words, at the juncture where the divergent roads of history meet — and diverge again. (In Gorke-Kiosk)

'Sounds of Resistance' is an installation composed by New York based electronic musician and composer Erdem Helvacioğlu of the recorded sounds at Gezi which will accompany visitors in their circular journey in the "divergent roads of history." (In Gorke-Kiosk between 18:30 - 19:30. There will also be a special performance of the sound installation in Studia R, in a darkened environment, followed by a QA with the composer on June 7, 2023 at 18:00.)

'Living Books' are people who are as extraordinary as any ordinary person who experienced Gezi. They are people who are as worthy as anyone to have their 'experiences become a book.' Incidentally, they are also people who in the 'Divergent Roads of History' exhibition will join the visitors to talk about their experiences during and after Gezi. (In Gorke-Kiosk, Saturdays and Sundays between 14:30 - 16:30, with Filiz Tütüncü Çağlar, Ülker Sözen and Ceylan Dizdar.)

'Panel Discussions:' are discursive events where visitors can talk with invited guests and each other about the manifestations of authoritarianism and the future of democracy in Turkey and the world. They are all framed as moderated TV programs with audience and will include short, thematic videos produced by Murathan Varol and Banu Acun. In each panel, in addition to invited speakers, unjustly imprisoned Gezi activists, human rights defenders or opposition politicians will speak to the audience in their own words through the letters they penned for this particular event. A detailed, thematic list of the individual panels can be found in the Panel Program table. (In Studio-R)

GORKI

2 June 2023, Friday 17:00

Zeynep Gambetti, Nil Mutluer, Murat Özbank - Video messages from: Gültan Kışanak, Osman Kavala

Diverging Roads of History: The Authoritarian Decade of Turkey after Gezi

This panel raises and addresses the question: how come Turkey, where ten years ago Gezi paved a clear pathway to a pluralistic democracy, finds itself ten years later struggling to emerge from the dark swamp of populist authoritarianism? Incidentally, this is also the question around which the exhibition “The Diverging Roads of History” which accompanies the Library of resistance is organized. (in English)

3 June 2023, Saturday 17:00

Yaşar Adanalı, Emre Gönülçür, Begüm Fırat Özden, Ülker Sözen - Video messages from: Mücella Yapıcı, Tayfun Kahraman

Kepçe! Urbanization from Gezi to Earthquake.

The controversy between democracy and populist authoritarianism easily translates into a myriad of controversies about urban spaces, development plans and construction practices. The spirit of solidarity that brought together the Gezi activists to defend an urban park in Istanbul against Erdogan government’s re-development plans, was the same spirit of solidarity that came to the rescue of the victims of Erdogan’s populist authoritarian urbanization policies after the recent earthquake. This panel addresses the question of democratization from the perspective of urbanization. (in English)

4 June 2023, Sunday 17:00

İpek Demirok, Zeynep Kivılcım, Hakan Mertcan, Peter Steudtner - Video messages from: Çiğdem Mater

Strategizing Resilience: Working with Trauma

Deliberately pursued policies of societal polarization, purges from universities, human rights violations like political show trials and arbitrary detention of opposition politicians, human rights defenders and journalists, bombings and political killings, which mark the authoritarian decade of Turkey after Gezi, have left a debris of traumas and trauma victims in their wake. This panel addresses the ways of dealing with trauma both from a sociological and psychological perspective. (in English)

10 June 2023, Saturday 17:00

Yiğit Aksakoğlu, Gizem Aksu, Gamze Elvan, Evin Kışanak, Erden Kosova, Emine Uçak - Video messages from: Mine Özerden

Plurality — then in Gezi, now at ballot boxes

Gezi was the common cry for freedom by a host of societal actors that embraced Turkey’s ideational, religious, ethnic and gender diversity in all its different colors. Incidentally these are also the differences of which today’s anti-authoritarian opposition block is formed. In this panel a host of participants representing this diversity of backgrounds address the question of how and why it was possible for them “to act in concert” in all their plurality against the authoritarian excesses of a repressive government — then in Gezi, now at the ballot boxes. (in Turkish, English translation)

11 June 2023, Sunday 17:00

Shadi Amin, Aleksandros Apostodolis, Omer Krieger, Neşe Özgen, Buket Türkmen, Nazan Üstündağ

- Video messages from: Sebahat Tuncel

Resistance and Peace at the Crossroads of Europe and the Middle East

Neither the rise of populist authoritarianism, nor democratic resistance to it, is a phenomenon unique to Turkey. This panel brings together activists from around the world who resist against populist authoritarianism in their respective countries. (in English)

17 June 2023, Saturday 17:00

Feyza Akınerdem, Asena Günal, Dilek Kurban, Emma Sinclair-Webb - Video messages from: Can Atalay

Human Rights! The deterioration of the rule of law in Turkey after Gezi.

Turkey’s authoritarian decade after Gezi was marked by blatant human rights violations and, particularly after the attempted coup of June 2016, almost total collapse of the rule of law in the country. This panel discusses the human rights situation in Turkey both from an activist and a legal perspective. (in English)

18 June 2023, Sunday 17:00

Robin Çelikateş, Ayça Çubukcu, Nil Mutluer, Murat Özbank, Seda Yüksel - Video messages from: Füsün Üstel

Gezi Goes Global: The Future of Democracy and Authoritarianism in Turkey and the World

This panel takes a look at the future of democracy and authoritarianism in Turkey and the world. In the concluding event of the panel series, the participants will take a look at the future of democracy and authoritarianism from the perspective of Turkey’s post-gezi era. They will address, among others, questions like: What can right defenders and democratic activists from all around the world learn from Turkey’s decade-long teetering between radical democratic and populist authoritarian paths? Can populist authoritarians ever be beaten through democratic means? If yes, how? If not, why not? (in English)

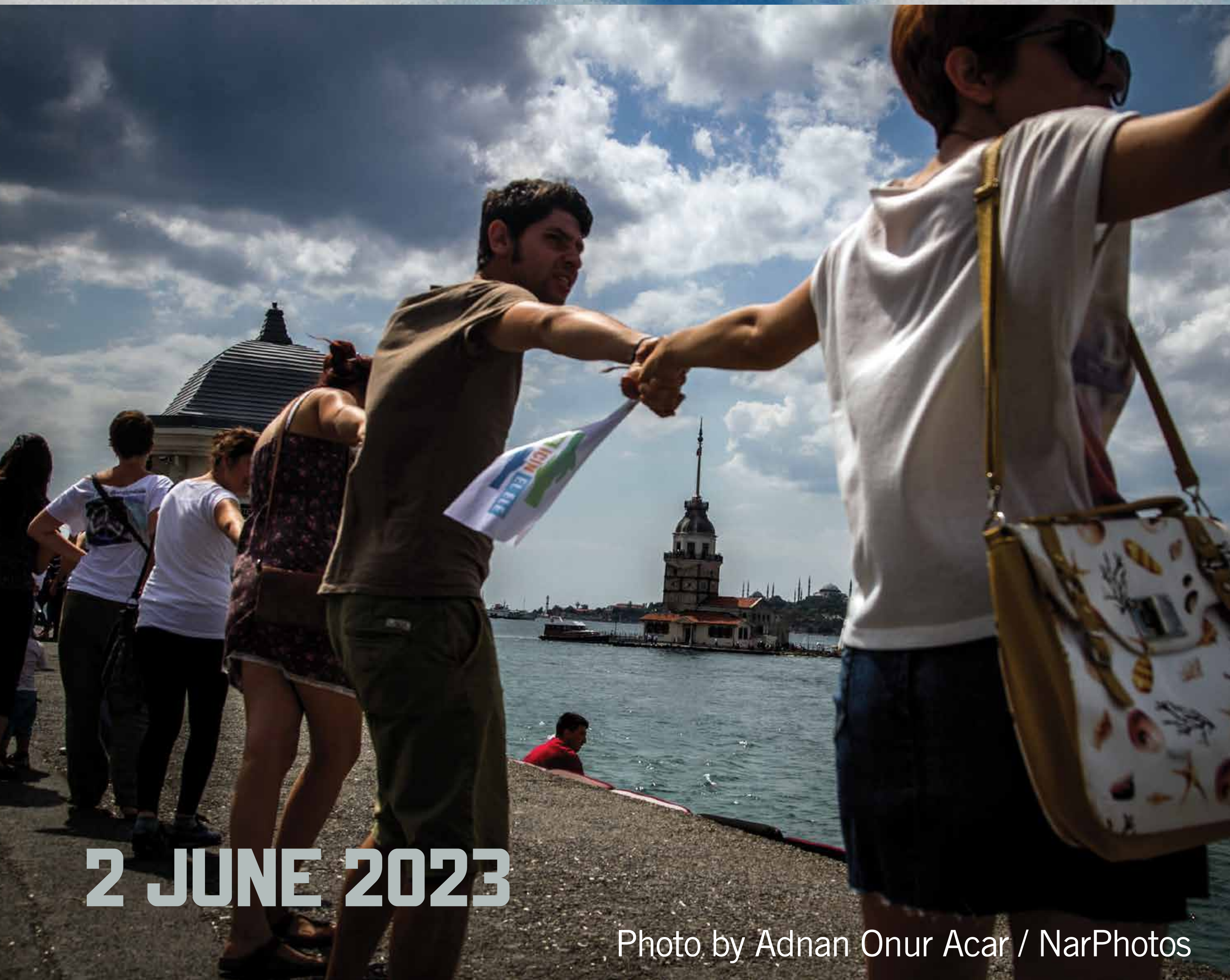
GOYAKI

DIVERGING ROADS OF HISTORY: THE AUTHORITARIAN DECADE OF TURKEY AFTER GEZI

Zeynep Gambetti, Murat Özbek, Nil Mutluer

Video messages from:
Gültan Kışanak, Osman Kavala

PANEL



2 JUNE 2023

Photo by Adnan Onur Acar / NarPhotos

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GORAKI

KEPÇE!

URBANIZATION FROM GEZI TO EARTHQUAKE

Yaşar Adanalı, Emre Gönlügür, Begüm Fırat Özden

Video messages from:

Mücella Yapıcı, Tayfun Kahraman

PANEL

3 JUNE 2023



Photo by Ahmet Şık / NarPhotos

Moderator: Ülker Sözen

LIBRARY OF RESISTANCE/DIVERGING ROADS OF HISTORY

Curators: Nil Mutluer and Murat Özbek

GÖRÜKİ

STRATEGIZING RESILIENCE: WORKING WITH TRAUMA

İpek Demirok, Hakan Mertcan, Peter Steudtner

Video messages from:
Çiğdem Mater

PANEL



4 JUNE 2023

Photo by Eren Aytuğ / NarPhotos

Moderator: Zeynep Kivilcim

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GORAKI

PLURALITY

THEN IN GEZI, NOW AT BALLOT BOXES

Yiğit Aksakođlu, Gizem Aksu, Gamze Elvan,
Evin Kışanak, Erden Kosova, Emine Uçak

Video messages from:
Mine Özerden

PANEL

10 JUNE 2023



Photo by Saner Şen / NarPhotos

Moderator: Nil Mutluer

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GORAKI

RESISTANCE AND PEACE AT THE CROSSROADS OF EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Shadi Amin, Aleksandros Apostodolis, Omer Krieger,
Buket Türkmen, Nazan Üstündağ
Video messages from:
Sebahat Tuncel

PANEL

11 JUNE 2023



Photo by Tolga Sezgin / NarPhotos

Moderator: Neşe Özgen

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GORKI

HUMAN RIGHTS!

THE DETERIORATION OF THE RULE OF LAW IN TURKEY AFTER GEZI.

Feyza Akınerdem, Asena Günal,

Emma Sinclair-Webb

Video messages from:

Can Atalay

PANEL

17 JUNE 2023

Photo by Eren Aytuğ / NarPhotos

Moderator: Dilek Kurban

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GORAKI

GEZI GOES GLOBAL

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY AND AUTHORITARIANISM
IN TURKEY AND THE WORLD

Robin Çelikateş, Ayça Çubukcu, Nil Mutluer,
Murat Özbank

Video messages from:

Füsun Üstel

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