

# EWI Takes Concrete Action on Conflict Prevention

*EastWest Institute's International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy brings together prominent public figures and resolves to establish an international panel and a parliamentarians network for conflict prevention.*

By Sertaç Aktan and Mustafa Özbek in Brussels

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## Today's reality leaves much to be desired.

*"In the last decade more than 15 million people have lost their lives to war, 40 million people have been forced to flee their homes, and genocide and mass atrocity crimes have again stalked parts of the world. An unacceptable gap continues to exist between the international community's rhetoric about conflict prevention, and its responsibility to protect people from catastrophic human rights violations, and the reality of its efforts."*

- Declaration of the EastWest Institute's International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy High Level Advisory Board.

### Fast pace

The EastWest Institute's (EWI) International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy took concrete steps toward institutionalizing conflict prevention. Coming on the heels of the inaugural meeting in May and the Istanbul meeting in September, the Core Group of the Task Force and the High Level Advisory Board held their first joint session today at the Egmont Palace in Brussels. The meeting was held in the presence of HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium and opened by the Belgian Foreign Minister Karel De Gucht.



Karel De Gucht

De Gucht underlined the dynamic nature of conflict prevention and the changing threat perception.

*"[Early warning mechanisms] need to diversify in reply to new threats on the horizon. The impact of migration, climate change, lack of access to land and fresh water and the competition for natural resources, these new challenges also require effective response mechanisms."*

### International call to action

The main objective of the meeting was to put finishing touches to an international declaration. In the declaration, the Task Force notes that conflict prevention is part of the International community's pledge under the UN Millennium Declaration of 2000 and the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005. The gap between the reality and practice of conflict prevention speaks for itself: While more than \$20 billion was spent over the past five years on UN peacekeeping measures, only a tiny fraction of this amount was allocated to prevention. *"Violent conflict will only be transformed towards sustainable peace if all the stakeholders work together,"* the declaration emphasizes.



John Mroz



Gareth Evans



Prince Hassan

The Task Force produced a succinct and powerful declaration laying out a practicable vision for the future. In order to advance its objectives effectively, the Task Force has resolved to establish an International Panel and a Parliamentarians Network for Conflict Prevention and Human Security.

### **EWI's value and commitment**

EWI President John Mroz explained where the organization's efforts fit in the overall picture: *"These kinds of ideas are meant to address deficiencies in conflict prevention structures and go to the heart of the issue of how do we begin to build political will for conflict prevention. We will continue to devote our resources and efforts not just to have the ideas put on the table but actually to take those ideas and begin to help to implement them."*

CEO of the International Crisis Group and Task Force High Level Advisory Board Member Gareth Evans explained how the new effort will provide a specific value:

*"We are talking about people who all have had an immense amount of practical experience in the business of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. We see ourselves as creating quite practical, sharply focused -not just adding to the pile of academic literature and general analysis- but practical advice, practical advocacy responses to particular situations."*

The Task Force set itself concrete objectives including the implementation of the UN Secretary General's call for allocation of some \$100 million a year to conflict prevention.

### **The media and conflict Prevention**

The role of the media also featured prominently among the objectives where a call was made for more reporting of conflict prevention success stories.

Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan led a call for the media to play a more constructive role when reporting about humanitarian crises.

*"I would like to see a day where citizens' conferencing is possible. With all due respect to the CNNs and BBCs and the 370 television stations in our region, there is very little exchange of information about potential crisis."*

Speaking to IHA during the sessions, Ihlas CEO and EWI Board Member Ahmet M. Oren said he was impressed by EWI's emphasis on the role of the media: *"Whether we like it or not, this is the age of new, global media. It is essential for conflict prevention efforts to utilize the media in an effective way. EWI's comprehension of the role of the media will bring new opportunities in raising awareness for this worthy cause."*



Ahmet M. Oren



The First joint meeting of the Core Group and the High Level Advisory Board of the EWI International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy.



EWI ([www.ewi.info](http://www.ewi.info)) is an international, non-partisan, entrepreneurial organization that works to make the world a safer place by addressing the seemingly intractable problems that threaten regional and global stability. Founded in 1980, EWI has centers in Brussels, New York and Moscow.



The International Task Force is composed of a Core Group of seventeen experts in the area of conflict prevention and a High Level Advisory Board. The members of the High Level Advisory Board are as follows:

**Martti Ahtisaari, Finland**

Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the future status process for Kosovo. Former President of Finland.

**Sadig Al-Mahdi, Sudan**

Leader of the Ummah Party. Former Prime Minister of Sudan.

**Lakhdar Brahimi, Algeria**

Former Under Secretary General and Special Adviser of the Secretary General of the United Nations. Former Foreign Minister of Algeria.

**Kim Campbell, Canada**

Former Prime Minister of Canada. Founding member of the Club de Madrid.

**Jan Eliasson, Sweden**

Ambassador, Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Darfur. Former Foreign Minister of Sweden.

**Gareth Evans, Australia**

President and CEO of International Crisis Group. Former Foreign Minister of Australia.

**Prince El Hassan bin Talal, Jordan**

President of the Arab Thought Forum.

**Thorvald Stoltenberg, Norway**

President of the Norwegian Red Cross. Former Foreign Minister of Norway and UN Special Representative in the former Yugoslavia.

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High Level Advisory Board members and EWI President John Mroz at the press conference:  
(Left to Right) Gareth Evans, Martti Ahtisaari, Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, John Mroz, Kim  
Campbell, Sadiq Al Mahdi, Jan Eliasson and Task Force Chair Ortwin Hennig.



Prince Hassan, John Mroz, Kim Campbell