

# Yunus ÇOLAK, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor in the Department of the International Relations,  
Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye

Email: yunus.colak@medeniyet.edu.tr | Phone: + 90 539 303 5781 | LinkedIn: yunuscolaktr

## EDUCATION

- 2017-2023 Ph.D., Political Sciences and International Relations, Istanbul University
- 2015-2017 M.A., Political Sciences and International Relations, Yıldız Technical University
- 2011-2015 B.A., International Relations, Balıkesir University (2011-2015)

## RESEARCH & WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2026 - Ongoing Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Law,  
The Edinburgh University
- 2024 - Ongoing Faculty Member, International Relations Department,  
Istanbul Medeniyet University  
*A State own university based in Istanbul*
- 2020 - 2024 Project Director, Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum  
*An International Institution focused on the youth development,  
Affiliated to the Islamic Cooperation Organization (OIC)*

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

---

Yunus Çolak is currently a faculty member in the Department of International Relations at Istanbul Medeniyet University. He joined the University of Edinburgh as a The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK)-funded Visiting Post-Doctoral Researcher from March 2026 to March 2027.

Çolak conducts interdisciplinary research on territorial politics, foreign policy crises, and the intersection of law and security in international relations. He has developed an academic profile at the intersection of three interconnected areas: territorial disputes in foreign policy, treaty law and crisis diplomacy, and the transformation of secessionist movements in contested spaces.

Çolak's research focuses on how territorial claims and spatial contestations shape the foreign policy behavior of states, particularly under crisis conditions. His work on Türkiye's handling of the Cyprus and Nakhchivan crises demonstrates how legal agreements, status quo principles, and geopolitical pressures converge in foreign policy decision-making. He investigates how states invoke territorial sovereignty in response to treaty-based territorial demands and how these dynamics reveal patterns of resistance, deterrence, and escalation. He is currently expanding this line of inquiry through archival research on Türkiye's Cold War experiences with the Soviet Union, particularly the 1945 demands on Turkish territory.

In a complementary line of research, Çolak investigates how non-state actors frame and negotiate territorial claims within shifting domestic and international environments. His work on the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) addresses how secessionist movements evolve from armed struggle to political engagement. Based on fieldwork in the Philippines and first-hand interviews with secessionist movement leaders, he examines how autonomy arrangements, disarmament, and international mediation reshape territorial disputes from within. Building on this research agenda, he aims to further explore the conditions under which secessionist movements choose to abandon armed struggle and integrate into the political system.

During his post-doctoral research, Çolak will be conducting a project titled "Transforming Secessionist Movements through Peace Agreements" in collaboration with Dr. Sanja Badanjak of the Edinburgh Law School. He will focus on the peace processes involving the Philippine government, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), with a specific focus on transitional justice mechanisms.

Çolak's research contributes to the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:

- SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

Main Field	Sub-Field
Security Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coercion strategies in International Relations</li> <li>• Compellence Strategies, Coercion Diplomacy, Blackmail Strategy</li> </ul>
Territorial Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Territorial Issues in Philippines</li> <li>• Foreign policy crises of Türkiye involving territorial disputes and the law of treaties</li> <li>• Secessionist Movements               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)</li> <li>• Moro Liberation Front (MNLF)</li> <li>• Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2024 – 2025 – Fall Term
- IR467 – Globalization & World Order
  - PSP103 – Introduction to the Political Sciences
  - ULI474 – Turkish – Greek Relations in the Modern Era: Crises and Opportunities
- 2023 – 2024 – Spring Term
- IR106 – Introduction to the International Relations
  - ULI204 – Introductions to the Global Politics II

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

### *Books*

Yunus Çolak (2023). “*Transformation of Secessionist Movements in the 21st Century from Armed Struggle to Disarming: The Case of MILF And LTTE.*” Ankara: Nobel Publishing. (Published in Turkish)

### *Peer - Reviewed Journal Publications*

Yunus Çolak (2023) “*A Farewell to Arms in the 21st Century: The Case of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front*”, **Siyasal: Journal of Political Sciences**, 32(2):279–295. (Indexed in Web of Science)

Yunus Çolak (2023). “*Türkiye’s March 1 Iraq Motion: A Neoclassical Realist Analysis Attempt.*” **Journal of History School**, 17(64): 1278-1294.

Fuat Aksu and Yunus Çolak (2019). “*Contractual Obligations in Turkey’s Foreign Policy Crises: The Cyprus and Nakhchivan Crises*”. **bilig – Journal of Social Sciences of the Turkic World**, 88: 19-54. (Indexed in Web of Science, Published in Turkish)

### *International Conferences*

Yunus Çolak (2020), “*The Turkish Grand National Assembly in Türkiye’s Foreign Policy: An Analysis of Decisions to Deploy Troops Abroad,*” **International Symposium on National Sovereignty and Representation, Turkish Grand National Assembly**, Ankara (In Turkish)

Yunus Çolak (2016), “*Crises of Turkish Foreign Policy Caused by Violation of Status Quo And Treaties: Cases of Cyprus and Nakhchivan*”, printed in abstract booklet, presented at **V. Blue Black Sea International Congress**, Istanbul (Published In Turkish)

### *Publications in Review*

Yunus Çolak, “*The Blackmail Strategy in Foreign Policy: Rethinking the Soviet Demands and Turkish Resistance in 1945*” (Under review in **All Azimuth: A Journal of Foreign Policy and Peace**), (Indexed in Scopus)

## **RESEARCH GRANTS & PROJECTS**

Awarded The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkiye (**TUBITAK**) 2219 International Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (2026).

Doctoral Fellowship by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkiye (**TUBITAK**) (2019 – 2023)

Doctoral Fellowship on international security and terrorism studies by **Turkish Council of Higher Education**, (2018 – 2023)

## **SKILLS**

**Microsoft Office:** Proficient in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

**SPSS and R:** Working knowledge for data organization and basic statistical analysis.

### **Qualitative Analysis:**

Experienced in conducting in-depth interviews, content analysis, and case studies.

- Conducted an **exclusive interview with MILF leader Al-Haj Murad** in 2019 and 2023.
- Participated as an observer to the **Bangsamoro Organic Law referendum** in Cotabato City, Philippines, on February 21, 2019.

**Experience with archives**, including Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U.S. FRUS, and British National Archives.

## **LANGUAGES**

Turkish: Native; English: Fluent