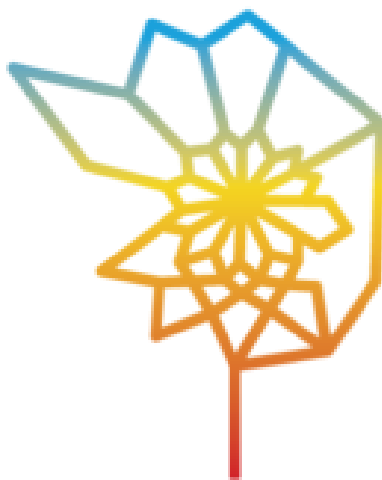


# ANNUAL REPORT 2018



**THE  
HAGUE  
PEACE  
PROJECTS**



WWW.THEHAGUEPEACE.ORG  
INFO@THEHAGUEPEACE.ORG  
+31(0)618051097

PAVILJOENSGRACHT 20  
2512 BP, THE HAGUE,  
THE NETHERLANDS

KVK: 60891726  
IBAN: NL39 TRIO 0197 9213 37

---

# Contents

I. Introduction.....	3
II. Programs.....	4
1. Turkish-Kurdish Dialogue.....	4
2. Great Lakes Region.....	5
3. Bangladesh.....	6
4. Sudan.....	7
5. The Freedom Book Fair.....	8
6. The Hague Hacks.....	9
7. Ya Laziz Catering.....	10
III. Events and Activities.....	11
IV. Donors.....	12



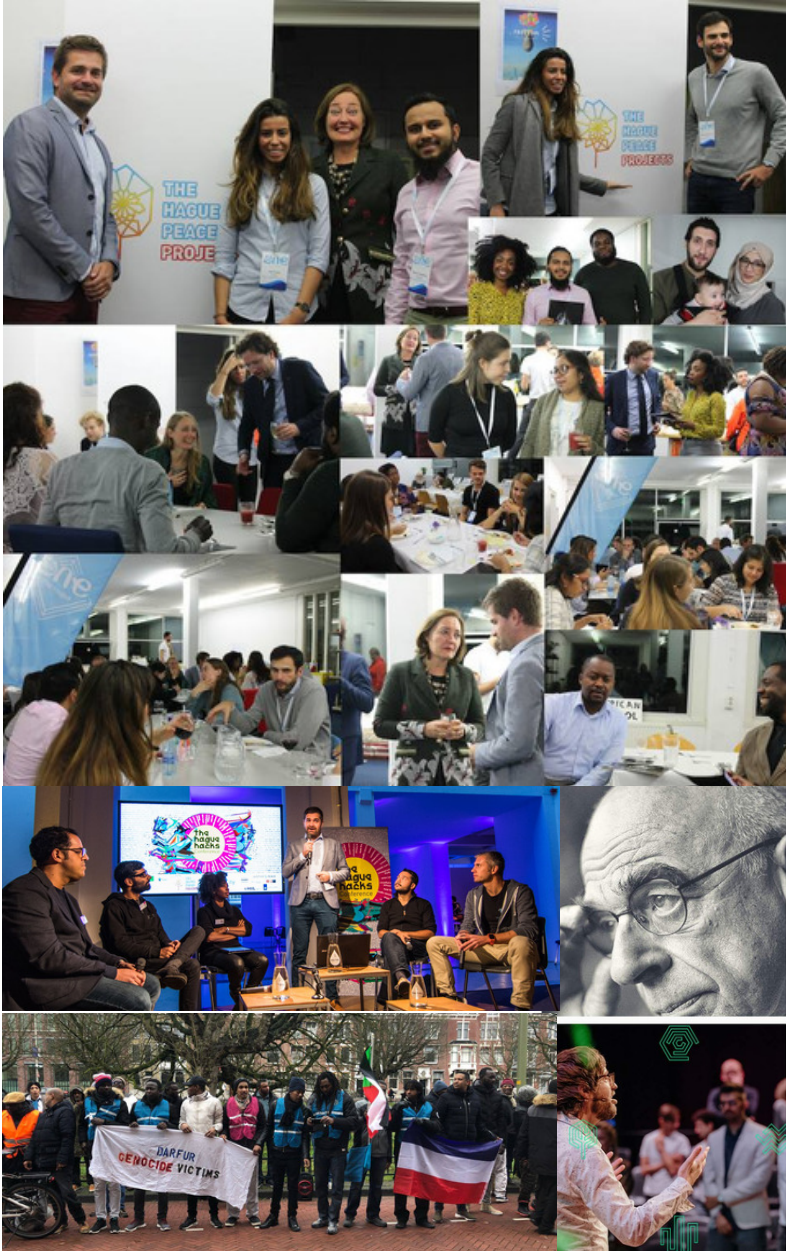
The Hague Peace Projects was established in 2014 by four human rights and conflict resolution professionals, who all agreed that there is a pressing need to provide people in Europe and those in conflict regions with genuine and reliable information about on-going political and social disputes, both locally and transnationally. Through research, education, elaborate analysis and regular personal contact with diaspora communities within Europe, particularly in The Netherlands, The Hague Peace Projects creates the possibility to comprehend the real roots and impact of human rights conflicts.

At The Hague Peace Projects we believe that conflicts can only be resolved through the creation of spaces for dialogue, as opposed to violent means of dispute resolution. In this regard, we believe that it is crucial to bring together various actors, such as human rights activists and defenders but also victims of oppressive regimes, who can establish peaceful and respectful dialogue. Our organisation comprises seven working groups, which are different from each other in relation to objectives, size, nature of dialogues and participants. Currently, these groups include Turkish-Kurdish Dialogue, Bangladesh, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, The Great Lakes Region. We place particular focus on the aforementioned geographical areas insofar as our intentions centre the need to raise awareness locally, in The Netherlands, on the largely overlooked situations of conflict and human rights abuses taking place outside of Europe but also to underscore the immensely reverberating impact that these developments can have everywhere on the globe.

The forth annual report of The Hague Peace Projects considers the achievements of the organisation throughout the year 2018 a great success. We are proud to have gone through a fruitful year in which we saw our organisational network expand significantly, our interests and outlooks - broadened, our human resources - increased and our planned activities and well-established monthly and annual projects - developed but also improved in an exciting way!

In 2018 we invested a considerable amount of time, resources and energy into our organisational activities which spanned cultural, social, educational and artistic events, all aimed at creating the space and network of people who can empower and foster positive social change and peaceful conflict resolution. In short, during 2018, The Hague Peace Projects achieved multiple goals: the organisation assisted in the creation of dialogue between various diaspora communities locally, in The Netherlands, who otherwise uphold contrasting, or at times conflicting and opposing, beliefs on sensitive issues. Thereupon, we helped in connecting people from diverse backgrounds and holding diverging outlooks by means of forging peaceful and respectful dialogue. Being part of such a challenging but, most of all, inspiring and empowering process enabled us to sustain our confidence and belief in the power of peace-building through dialogue and freedom of expression. It allowed us to explore various complex phenomena and expose ubiquitous prejudices on certain matters. We are convinced that by continuing on the same path of success and inspiration, peace, respect and human rights for all will become a reality.

In the following sections we will explore the overall work and achievements of every working group from 2018 as crucial to our general program of work and several annual events and initiatives established by The Hague Peace Projects and its partners.





## PROGRAMS

On the 23rd of February we hosted the event "Turkey: friend or foe?" as part of the larger Freedom Book Fair 2018. It focused on freedom of expression in Turkey. Speakers were Dies Lesage (professor political science), Tayfun Balçık (social activist, historian), Mirko Jouamer (Political scientist) and Frederieke Geerdink (journalist).

The position of Turkey is continuously shifting, one time it is perceived as a friend and at other times an enemy. There is a clear clampdown on freedom of expression on all levels of society, such as lawyers, academics, journalists and artists. Most were put down as result of the coup. Therefore, this discussion aimed to evaluate the situation within Turkey.

Right from the start it was clear that the divisions within the panel were quite large, with Frederieke Geerdink choosing to defend the Kurdish position of the PKK and Dies Lesage defending the position of the Erdogan regime. The moderate voices came from Tayfun and Mirko. This made the debate sharp and at times, tense.



### Kurdish-Turkish cultural events 'Maydonoz Dialogues' (Rotterdam)

From September 2018 until December 2018 we organized four Turkish-Kurdish cultural events in the city of Rotterdam. We had a Poetry Night in which Kurdish and Turkish poetry was presented and discussed in a multicultural setting. A Fashion Night in which traditional Kurdish and Turkish clothing was showcased to the audience. There were Kurdish and Arab speakers who talked about their mother tongue in a Turkish context. For the third event we watched the documentary 'The lost children of the Caliphate', in which a father brings his daughter and grandchildren back home from a refugee camp in Syria. The last event was a food night in which we reflected on three years of Turkish-Kurdish-Armenian dialogue with personal stories from the participants and ate home-made lahmacun with ayran.

### Research: 'Muslims in Dutch papers'

The project 'Muslims in Dutch papers' is a quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis of how the biggest four papers of the Netherlands report about Muslims. Started since November 1 we counted and registered on a daily basis, building a database showing for instance how often the word 'terrorism' is used in combination with 'Muslim'. In cooperation with online media outlets Republiek Allochtonië and Nieuw Wij we published articles about negative framing with regards to muslims. We want to initiate a dialogue with the editors of De Volkskrant, De Telegraaf, NRC and AD (the papers), when the final report is presented at Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam at March 21st.

### Toerkoes in Nieuw-West (Amsterdam, New Metropolis, Pakhuis de Zwijger)

In cooperation with New Metropolis (Pakhuis de Zwijger) we realised three events concerning primarily the Turkish-Dutch inhabitants of Amsterdam Nieuw-West, part of the city which is developing fast nowadays. The first event 'Back in The Netherlands' depicted how Turkish-Dutch citizens experience their life in Amsterdam Nieuw-West, living highly segregated socio-economically and culturally. The second event was a workshop on how to make 'cig köfte', raw meat balls (vegetarian) and a discussion about racism and 'whiteness' in Amsterdam. In the third event we discussed the phenomena of 'loneliness in the city' (the Turkish-Dutch citizens of Amsterdam have the highest rate of loneliness as a group) and brainstormed with the public what can be done to get people less lonely in the city. More events will take place in 2019.







**The Great Lakes Region's Monthly Meeting** took place on the 31st of August. Its theme was 'Facing Burundi'. Topical discussion surrounded the situation of the Great Lakes Region with emphasis on Burundi. This event started with a historical background of the political crisis of Burundi. Then the common misunderstanding of the happenings within Burundi were discussed with a particular focus placed on the need of solidarity and mobilisation among Burundians. The central questions revolved around the way that the diaspora and the international community at large can contribute to the improvement of the situation.

The event **"Threats to freedom of the press in the Great Lakes Region of Africa"** took place on Sunday the 25th of February. It discussed challenges surrounding the Freedom of Expression in the Great Lakes Region, namely Burundi, Rwanda, Congo, Uganda and Kenya. Participating in this panel were Fred Muvunyi (journalist DW, Rwanda), Ewing Salumu (journalist, DR Congo), Moses Atocon (social media activist, Uganda), Trony Ingati (journalist, Kenya).

First all of the participating speakers explained about the current situation in their respective countries. Moses stressed the enormous powers that the Ugandese regime has at its disposal to crack down on dissent. From a distance, press freedom in Uganda seems quite present. Newspapers can critique and speak out openly, so it seems. However, there are invisible lines that should not be crossed. Mostly under the guise of antiterrorism, there is a host of measures that the regime can take in order to keep people in line. It can even shut down all social media in order to prevent any movement against the regime of becoming too big to handle. With regular occurrence, journalists are being beaten, arrested and tortured for exposing corruption and government crimes.

Ewing corroborates this story of Uganda and points to similar problems in Congo. He shows many cases of journalists being killed by the Congolese government. Ewing goes back to the history of the country and shows that it has known only dictatorship. People don't even know what free thinking and free press is. They are thought to applaud and dance for their leaders. Most if not all of the media in DRC is owned by politicians or businesses who sell airtime. Many of these media are full of hatred, provide little or no information and are vulnerable to whoever funds it. There is an enormous task ahead, both to train people's independent thinking and to support independent non-politicised media. Many people, being uneducated, believe lies, propaganda and conspiracy theories that fuel conflict.



Fred Muvunyi focused on his personal story from a top level journalist in Rwanda to a persona non grata. Muvunyi was the head of the Council of Journalists when he publicly condemned the move by the regime to ban BBC from the country. The decision to block BBC was made because they produced a documentary casting doubts on the supposed innocence of the Rwandan Patriotic Front and Kagame during the genocide. Muvunyi recounted all of the steps that eventually got him fired and eventually threatened so he had no other choice than to go to Europe. Also there the threats didn't stop. He was visited in his hotel by Rwandese security personnel and warned against going back. He is now writing for the Deutsche Welle and the Washington Post where he continues to be critical. The threats continue to this day. Lastly, Trony Ingati explained the challenges that Kenya faces in its media. She also emphasised on the importance of well-trained journalists and their duty to inform the public and pointed out the realities of citizen journalism. She also demonstrated the strides Kenyan media boasts and how difficult it was to report without fear from the nation's 'Big Brother' and state's interference in the past two decades.





**Bangladesh** was rocked by violence during the years of 2013 and 2014, when the power struggle between political groups and the division between social fractions reached a peak point. During this period, mass media (mainstream and social) played a huge role in propagating hatred and violence rather than promoting and fostering peace. The current situation in Bangladesh does not present an improvement from those years but rather constitutes an all-permeating societal and political normalisation of such extremities. Specifically, irresponsible media politics and the division between the integral media outlets further contributed to harsher media regulation by the government. These developments have curtailed freedom of expression for all involved parties and have only contributed to the solidified power grip on part of the state apparatus and the increased power in the hands of the government.

In fact, the role of media in modern society was never beyond criticism, as mass media not only played the role of a force for democratisation of society but also an instrument for forging citizens consent on matters in which the ruling parties were direct stakeholders. Particularly, during the recent years with the rise of internet technology and the arrival of social media, mass media has also become a space where the distinction between facts and fiction, news and propaganda has blurred to a point which is unprecedented in human history.

In that regard, on the 22nd of February 2018 the debate “Media as a catalyst of Social Cohesion in Bangladesh” took place within the wider event of The Hague Peace Projects - The Freedom Book Fair. Participating in this debate were Ajanta Deb Roy (Social Media Activist), Fahmidul Haque (Professor Media Studies) and Parvez Alam (Writer, Activist). The moderator was Dessi Damianova from Free Press Unlimited.

According to Parvez Alam, to cope with the tense situation we need to focus on a media literacy policy framework that encourages critical engagement on part of the audience. If the consumer of news and information's are critical towards all forms of media outlets (both mainstream and alternative), then all forms of media actors will be obliged to be more accountable.

The Bangladesh Workgroup of The Hague Peace Projects also participated in the Hague Hacks Festival 2018. On behalf of the Bangladesh workgroup, several prominent activists and researchers were invited to the festival:

1. Rafida Bonya Ahmed- a humanist activist, blogger and author.
2. Imtiaz Shams- Founder of Faith to Faithless, an organisation working to reduce the stigma faced by ‘apostates’ of all religions.
3. Dr. Bharath Ganesh- a Researcher at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford specialising in the study of hate speech, right-wing extremism, and new media in Europe and North America.

The first phase of the workshop on Bangladesh revolved around the challenges experienced by Bangladeshi human rights activists in social media spheres and the second phase aimed to find solutions to the problems. The participants of the workshop took part in group brainstorming and came up with a campaign idea titled “#unban.me”.





A series of failed policies for nearly thirty years have brought Sudan to the brink of collapse. The devaluation of Sudan's currency, lack of necessary food products, shortages of fuels and medicines are economically and politically related. However, the regime is taking many security steps against the media to control the crisis rather than deal with the main problem. The end of 2018 heralded a tipping point in Sudan's history as the country entered a period of mass demonstrations demanding that president Omar Al-Bashir's regime steps down. The main target - governmental tough procedures against media outlets and the press, ranging from censorship to confiscations and prohibiting the journalists from writing. The Sudanese government's severe campaign against the press is intending to eradicate the current situation through security measures. By the end of 2018, 39 people were killed, according to Amnesty International, but many activists on the ground estimate the number to be higher. This approach will not solve the issue. Rather, it may lead to further escalation in a country that faces many unrests in Darfur, South Kordofan and The Blue Nile region.



On Friday the 16th of October, we had the honour to host an evening with the former prime minister Sadiq al-Mahdi about the future of Sudan. He has been elected prime minister of Sudan twice, and has been the only democratically elected leader of Sudan so far. Currently he is the leader of the Umma party, which is the largest party in Sudan. Although he is the head of Sudan Call (the organized opposition in Sudan) the Sudanese diaspora present didn't simply accept his leadership, but presented him with pointed questions. Sadiq al-Mahdi believes in non-violent change and plays an active and important role in establishing the conditions for a democratic transition of Sudan. He wants to enact regime change through dialogue or peaceful protest. Regime change was a topic that popped up several times during the discussion. 'What is needed for that?', 'With whom does one work together?' Another hot-button issue was of course what should happen to Al-Bashir, the current president of Sudan. In March 2009, Al-Bashir became the first sitting president to be indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), for allegedly directing a campaign of mass killing, rape, and pillage against civilians in Darfur. Should he be extradited to the ICC in The Hague, or not? Al-Mahdi felt that this, at least for the moment, should not be the priority of the opposition. He agreed that Al-Bashir had committed crimes, but what Sudan needs is a reconciliation program, much like South Africa. Some of the people in the audience opposed this standpoint by stating that in order to reach a stable situation of peace, justice needs to be done first. Are these voices too impatient and perhaps no longer well informed about the complexity of the situation on the ground, or are they righteously fed up with the same empty promises that they have been hearing for decades?





# The Hague Freedom Book Fair 2018



During the 21st-25th of February 2018, The Hague Peace Projects organised the 3rd edition of The Hague Freedom Book Fair. It took place in Het Koorenhuis, at the heart of The Hague.

Local and international publishing houses and book shops took part in the fair, while it attracted hundreds of visitors and participants. The fair showcased censored books from Syria, Bangladesh, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Iran, Turkey, The UK, The US and The Netherlands.

These books were partly written by persecuted and censored writers. The literature spanned topics on human rights and international political affairs among other regular books.

In total, 83 books were sold on the fair by our organisation. However, other book stalls sold many more of their own.

The 2018 Freedom Book Fair gathered people of diverse backgrounds, organisations and publishers together to address the global crisis of freedom of expression.

The Hague Peace Projects organised 15 events on the Freedom Book Fair - 6 panel discussions, 4 talks sessions with writers, 2 movie screenings with Q&A session with their directors and actors, 1 poetry experience, 1 book presentation and 1 afterparty with Syrian dances.

The panel discussions were on the topic of freedom of expression in Sudan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Iran, The Great Lakes Region in Africa and others. Experts from these countries and others were present as panelists in these discussions. Nearly 850 people attended them, while the discussion reached more than 10,000 people as live audience via Facebook and Youtube.





# The Hague Hacks 2018

The Hague Hacks program combines knowledge and expertise from our human rights network, with technical expertise from our partnerships and startup community, to produce a sustainable platform providing technical solutions to real-world humanitarian problems. We pride ourselves on our extensive network of human rights defenders who provide invaluable information from the ground-up regarding global conflicts, and relay reliable information on issues faced by both sides of the discussion table.

The Hague Hacks Festival 2018 was a great success and produced many useful and creative insights into the global challenges that were discussed this year. As a result many new connections and partnerships were created, with the long-term aim and motivation to further develop these solutions together. The Hague Hacks Festival 2018 has not only connected many professionals with experts from diverse disciplines and business sectors, but we have also expanded our mandate to attract interest from universities, with the cooperative goal of integrating our work into research projects under the generic heading: design for activism.

The following activities took place at The Hague Hacks Festival 2018:

- Explanation by Human Rights Defenders outlining all five challenges
- Presentation/interview with Anjali Nayer, Lucy Brinks and Fay Candiliari - BeDataDriven, Christina Moreno - SheMatters
- Presentations by the five Humanitarian Action Challenge Winners with word from Saskia Bruines



- Afghan food provided by the special food catering and peace initiative; 'Ya Laziz'.

Discovery' Workshops and Focus Groups: Bangladesh, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sudan, North Korea

- Presentation Ralf Graf - RxAxLxF, Tobias Schmitz - Global Institute of Water Environment and Health, Sapin Makengele - Congolese Painter
- Live interview Rory Bowe - Timby
- Presentation Christina Moreno - CEO & Founder She Matters, Yin Aiwen - Artist | Cyber-Urbanism Theorist
- Plenary Presentations by workshop groups & Discussions
- Presentation art work by Sapin Makengele - paintings, Hugo Serie - live drawings
- Drinks and snacks provided throughout the day by our host The Hague Humanity Hub

These activities achieved the following results:

This year we brought experience and expertise from all around the globe. Their collaboration and co-creation stimulated new partnerships and opportunities, and produced tangible results from our workshops. This has led to an emerging Hague Hacks and ImpactCity community with the long-term commitment to realising the goals put forth by The Hague Hacks Festival 2018.





# Ya Laziz Catering 2018



Ya Laziz is a cultural catering service that aims to promote Middle Eastern food and culture in The Hague and its surroundings. Most importantly, we are a space wherein people that had to flee their country of origin share their food, art and culture with the Dutch general public.

Ya Laziz offers waiters, chefs, musicians, artists and human rights activists with and without status living in the Netherlands the opportunity of work experience, especially to those that face difficulties in finding job opportunities. We believe that giving people equal chances and the possibility of growth, learning and sharing their culture, will enable to integrate better in The Hague, Netherlands. In addition, we particularly focus on the empowerment of young female newcomers that aim to make The Hague their home.

Ya Laziz is a very passionate, young and motivated team that currently consists of five people coming from Egypt, Syria, Afghanistan and Germany. We all believe that we can bring people together through food, to establish common grounds in nowadays complex and diverse world. We aim to offer people with migration backgrounds from the Middle East a platform to invite people to indulge into their cuisine and culture.

## Activities of Ya Laziz in 2018

- The Ya Laziz team organised its first official activity at the Hague Peace Projects by hosting a dinner for 30 delegates from the One Young World Summit in The Hague. For the event our Palestinian Syrian chef Ahmed Kalal made a lentil soup, Mousakaa, Kabseh and Syrian Salad. As a desert he made Mhalabe, a traditional rice pudding with grated coconut, pistachios and cherries.
- Our second event was during the International Human Rights Day on the 8th of December. The event was a collaboration between Ya Laziz, WE Organization, Vluchtelingen Werk Nederland, the Hague Peace Projects, and het Koorenhuis. The event was organised for an audience of 80 people that came from different backgrounds. In the event we aimed to bring the middle eastern cultural to the people together with music that was performed by Dutch, Ukrainian and Syrian Musicians. Also Jol AlHelo, a Syrian contemporary art dancer made an outstanding performance. Later a Kenyan human rights activist and feminist Mary Wanjiku Gichuhi shared her story and spoke about human rights as a bottom-up development.
- Our third event was making lunch for the Hague Hacks festival which was organised by the Hague Peace Projects in Humanity Hub on the 14th of December. Our Syrian chief Rasha Alkalla prepared Falafel sandwiches, homemade hummus and Madloka for 150 people.





## *2018 Events and Activities*

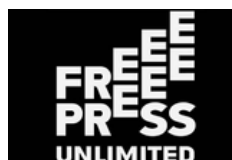
- 15th January - Bloedbroeders, Deel 3
- February - Freedom Book Fair
- 27th March - Movies that Matter Festival
- 17th April - Bloedbroeders, Deel 6
- 19th April - Muslims Represent
- 20th April - Great Lakes Region Meet-up
- 5th May - Liberation Day
- 25th May - Gathering: The Great Lakes Diaspora Meeting
- 7th June - Young Change-maker Session 3 "Meaningful Youth Participation"
- 15th June - The Hague Hacks: Design for Activism
- 17th June - Talking Peace in April and Beyond - "Creating Trust After Genocide"
- 20th June - World refugee day - refugee protection under threat
- 22nd June - The Great Lakes Region Diaspora talk to Jan Pronk
- 27th June - Great Lakes Region Weekly Meeting
- 28th June - Turkish-Kurdish Dialogue Meeting
- 7th July - Syrian Dinner
- 31st August - Facing Burundi
- 18th September - Toerkoes in Nieuw-West: Terug in Nederland
- 28th September - Maydonoz Dialogues
- 4th October - Journalists for Justice
- 16th October - Toerkoes in Nieuw-West #3: Workshop çiğ köfte maken
- 17th October - GGS: Bloedbroeders – Theater RAST
- 25th October - Maydonoz Dialogues: Koerdische en Turkse Fashion Night
- 27th October - Jongeren netwerkbijeenkomst Congo
- 13th November - Toerkoes in Nieuw-West #3: Turkse eenzaamheid in de stad
- 16th November - Future of Sudan – Discussion with Sadiq al-Mahdi
- 22nd November - Docu en nagesprek: De verloren kinderen van het Kalifaat
- 8th December - Ya Laziz – Food, Culture and Human Rights Talks
- 9th December - Write for Rights // Schrijf de gewetensgevangenen van de Hiraak
- 14th December - The Hague Hacks
- 21st December - Maydonoz Dialogues: Verhalen en Food Night!

**We would like to extend our gratitude to our kind sponsors! Without their help, our activities would not be possible!**



Erasmus  
University  
Rotterdam

*Erasmus*



FILMHUIS  
DEN HAAG



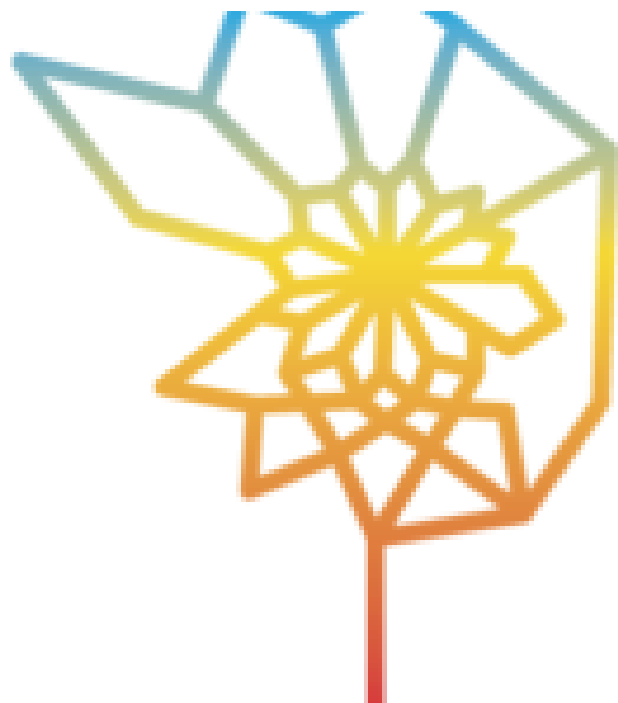
**ProDemos**

Huis voor democratie en rechtsstaat

Amnesty International, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Gemeente Den Haag, VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, PAX, WijDoenMee, Free Press Unlimited, Filmhuis Den Haag, Haella, Hivos, Oranje Fonds, Impact City, Movies That Matter, Gemeente Rotterdam, Prodemos

#### ANBI STATUS

As a non-profit organisation, the Hague Peace Projects (HPP) has been assigned the ANBI status by the Dutch Tax Agency. With this status, donations can be deducted from your taxable income. If you are interested in supporting us, please do so on our website [www.thehaguepeace.org](http://www.thehaguepeace.org).



**THE  
HAGUE  
PEACE  
PROJECTS**



# Contact

For more details on our past activities and to keep up to date on our current and coming activities, you can consult our website or connect through Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

Additionally, if you are interesting in joining us, making a donation, or using our expertise, you are welcome to contact us through email or telephone, or visit our office.

The Hague Peace Projects  
Paviljoensgracht 20, 2512 BP,  
The Hague, The Netherlands

[www.thehaguepeace.org](http://www.thehaguepeace.org)  
[info@thehaguepeace.org](mailto:info@thehaguepeace.org)  
+31(0)618051097

KvK: 60891726  
IBAN: NL39TRIO 0197 9213 37

