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Melinda Negrón-Gonzales, Associate Professor, Business, Politics, and Security Studies (UNHM) travel to Turkey

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UNH Global

Melinda Negrón-Gonzales

Associate Professor, Business, Politics, and Security Studies (UNHM) ~
Turkey



Professor Negrón-Gonzales next to Middlesex
University sign

In June 2019, I traveled to London to present a paper at the 3rd International Kurdish Studies Conference at Middlesex University and to conduct interviews with activists for a book project on human rights activism in Turkey.

My presentation was entitled, “Three Decades of Seeking Justice for the Disappeared in Turkey,” and it was included in a panel on

human rights and justice. This topic is one human rights violation I am covering in a book on physical integrity rights and human rights activism in the context of Turkey’s armed conflict. My talk covered the strategies and tactics employed by civil society organizations in Turkey to address the hundreds of disappearances of mostly Kurdish men that occurred in the mid-1990s during the peak of conflict.

Scholars from 22 countries attended the conference and, interestingly, I was one of only a few Americans. There are only several newly created Kurdish Studies programs in the US whereas British universities (and European universities more generally) have been at the



forefront of developing Kurdish Studies. I especially relished the opportunity to learn more about the research being conducted by Kurdish scholars in Iraq and Turkey and I am now in the newly created Kurdish Research Network, a transnational network connecting scholars working in and on Greater Kurdistan (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria). The conference ended with a fascinating panel presentation and discussion at the House of Commons in the British parliament which was organized by the London-based Center for Kurdish Progress. The talk was hosted by a member of parliament from the Labor Party and panelists addressed “The Kurdish Question in the Post Daesh (ISIS) Middle East.” The opportunity to participate in an international forum that was both academic and had policy implications was incredibly enriching.

IKSC 2019 panel on human rights and justice (Prof. Negrón-Gonzales at left)



IKSC group photo

In addition, during my time in London, I spoke with, among others, a long-time Kurdish activist and politician from Turkey as well as a representative from the Dialogue Platform Organization in Iraqi Kurdistan and the co-founder of the Mesopotamia Observatory of Justice. The interviews, conversations and panel discussions all provided crucial material for my book project and I am grateful to the Global Education Center for funding the trip.

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