



INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC &
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(ISIS) MALAYSIA



SETA

Kuala Lumpur-Ankara Dialogue 2026

Anchored in history, aligned for tomorrow

7 April 2026, Kuala Lumpur



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The Kuala Lumpur-Ankara Dialogue 2026

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In the first Kuala Lumpur-Ankara Dialogue, ISIS Malaysia and SETA Foundation gather policy visionaries and movers, who are keen observers and shapers of Ankara and Putrajaya's six-decade partnership and how their mutual interests impact on geopolitics and geoeconomics in their regions. The event aims to set the tone and standard for open and closed dialogues on Malaysia-Türkiye relations and West Asia-related issues.

Recognising the scarcity of specialists relative to the growing interest and needs on both sides, the dialogue offers a space for interlocutors from Malaysia, Türkiye and regional neighbours to identify each other's aspirations and strengths. The goal is advance collaborations in diplomacy; defence and security; trade; technology; and cultural and educational exchanges. Embodying the partnership spirit between Malaysia and Türkiye's leading strategic studies think-tanks, the dialogue seeks to deepen mutual understanding of the political and cultural sensibilities underlying each partner's decisions.



Programme

7 April 2026

0800-0845 **Arrival and registration**

0900-0910 **Opening remarks**

Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Executive Chairman

Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Prof Dr Nebi Miş

General Coordinator

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

0910-1000 **Session 1: What do Malaysia-Türkiye relations look like?**

The first session is "basic" by design and turns the typical strategic analysis discourse on its head by asking individuals, who have dealt with aspects of Malaysia-Türkiye cooperation in a professional capacity, to reflect on real-life examples of the bilateral relationship. The focus is not on crisis management but specific and unique challenges in bilateral interactions that, if not arrested, could impede the acceleration of Malaysia-Türkiye cooperation. Four experts will illustrate challenging moments in the cooperation and how they were resolved.

Moderator

Assoc Prof Dr Hatice Çelik

Director of the ASEAN Application and Research Centre

Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye

Speakers

Arividya Arimuthu

Senior Fellow

Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia



Lt-Gen (rtd) Datuk Johnny Lim Eng Seng

Malaysian Armed Forces

Assoc Prof Dr Murat Aslan

Researcher

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

Dr Ferhat Durmaz

Assistant Professor

Faculty of Political Sciences

Ankara University, Türkiye

1000-1030

Q&A

1030-1100

Keynote address

The Honourable Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim

1100-1200

Conversation with the Prime Minister

Moderator

Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

1200-1345

Lunch

1345-1425

Session 2: Geopolitics in West Asia and how Malaysia-Türkiye interests overlap therein

Ankara's military power and political clout are increasingly felt in West Asia. President Recep Erdoğan's 2023 Gulf tour signalled a reset of Türkiye's relations with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and the prioritisation of Arab/West Asian countries under his administration. Türkiye is one of the few Muslim-majority states that recognises Israel, which disagrees with Türkiye on Palestine and Syria. On the other hand, because of its limited weight in West Asian geopolitics, Putrajaya has been directing its efforts towards humanitarian assistance for Gaza and Syrian refugees in Syria and Türkiye, sending aid to earthquake victims in 2023. This session addresses West Asian successes and crises most pertinent to Malaysia's and Türkiye's separate and collective interests. The speakers will concentrate on Arabian Gulf dynamics, Palestine, Syria, Iran and humanitarian assistance. What are Ankara's goals in its dealings

with Iran, Israel and the Arab nations? Do Malaysian and Turkish interests overlap in any of West Asia's geopolitical development?

Moderator

Siti Farhana Sheikh Yahya

News Anchor
Astro Awani, Malaysia

Speakers

Dr Kadir Temiz

President
Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (ORSAM), Türkiye

Dr Adel Abdel Ghafar

Director of Foreign Policy Programme
Middle East Council on Global Affairs, Qatar

Dr Raihan Ismail

Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies
University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Dr Mustafa Caner

Foreign Policy Researcher
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

1425-1445

Q&A

1445-1500

Break

1500-1540

Session 3: Defence technology transfer and procurement deals

This session will discuss Türkiye-Malaysia defence cooperation within the context of Mindef's January 2026 assertion that "the top leadership of the MAF is not only responsible for ensuring operational readiness and effectiveness but also entrusted with strengthening public confidence in the nation's defence institution." Panellists will also contextualise these developments within the ASEAN defence, military and security risks and solutions.



Moderator

Prof Dr Gürol Baba

Professor of International Relations
Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye

Speakers

Dr Kogila Balakrishnan

Director of Policy and Engagement, Business Development
(Southeast Asia)
Warwick Manufacturing Group
University of Warwick, United Kingdom

Rıfat Öncel

Researcher
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

Dr Curie Maharani Savitri

Assistant Professor of Security Studies
Department of International Relations
Binus University, Indonesia

Thomas Daniel

Director of Foreign Policy and Security Studies
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

1540-1600

Q&A

1600-1615

Closing remarks

Prof Dr Nebi Miş

Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

1615

End



Profiles

Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Executive Chairman
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Faiz provides high-level counsel to the government on geopolitics, defence and security, as well as the evolving landscape of global geoeconomics. At ISIS Malaysia, he spearheads policy innovation and leads strategic Track 2 diplomacy. He is the Malaysian representative to the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons, and co-chair of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. He is also a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Good Governance and a distinguished adjunct professor of the International Islamic University of Malaysia.



Prof Dr Nebi Miş

General Coordinator
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

Miş is a faculty member in the Department of Political Sciences and Public Administration, Middle East Institute, Sakarya University. His research areas include political systems and institutions, democratisation, Kurdish issue, Turkish civil-military relations, security politics in Türkiye, Islamism and democratisation in the Middle East. He is the co-editor and co-writer of several books, such as *Democracy Watch: Social Perception of 15 July Coup Attempt*, *Turkey's Presidential System: Model and Practices* and *AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı: Siyaset*.





Adel Abdel Ghafa

Director of Foreign Policy Programme
Middle East Council on Global Affairs, Qatar

Adel is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar. He is a former non-resident fellow at the Brookings Institution's foreign policy programme and a fellow at the Brookings Doha Centre, where he was also acting director of research. He specialises in foreign policy and political economy of the Middle East and North Africa region. He is the author and editor of several volumes and reports, including *The Middle East: Revolution or Reform?*; *The European Union and North Africa: Prospects and Challenges*; and *Asia in the GCC: A New Strategic Partner?*.



Arividya Arimuthu

Senior Fellow
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Arividya is a policy strategist with more than 20 years' experience in the civil service, where she played a pivotal role in shaping Malaysia's trade architecture and leading complex negotiations. She is a former senior director at the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry and chief negotiator for the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.





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Dr Curie Maharani Savitri

Assistant Professor of Security Studies
Department of International Relations
Binus University, Indonesia

Curie is the coordinator of the Democracy, Technology, and Security Lab under the Centre for Business and Diplomatic Studies. She had worked with the National Committee for Economy and Industry, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia and at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. She is an observer of defence acquisition and industrial policy, offset, technology indigenisation and maritime security issues.



Dr Ferhat Durmaz

Assistant Professor
Faculty of Political Sciences
Ankara University, Türkiye

Durmaz's research interests include Chinese foreign policy, US-China relations, Southeast Asian studies and Turkish foreign policy, with a particular focus on Türkiye's relations with Asia. He teaches courses on Asia-Pacific politics, contemporary global issues and leads seminars on Asia-Pacific studies. He is a former visiting researcher at KUASIA – the Centre for Asian Studies at Koç University.





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Prof Dr Gürol Baba

Professor of International Relations
Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye

Baba serves as an adjunct professor in the Faculty of Humanities, DUKE Kunshan University. His research interests include Indo-Pacific international relations; theories of international relations; theories and practices of regionalisation; Australian foreign and security policy; Australia-US and Turkey-US relations; and Turkish foreign and security policy.



Assoc Prof Dr Hatice Çelik

Director of the ASEAN Application and Research Centre
Social Sciences University of Ankara, Türkiye

Çelik heads the Department of Asian Studies at the Institute for Area Studies, SSUA, where she also serves as vice-director. She is the founding director of the ASEAN Application and Research Centre, which promotes academic and policy engagement between Türkiye and Southeast Asia. Her research focuses on ASEAN, middle power diplomacy, Asian regionalism and the foreign policy dynamics of East Asian countries. She has published extensively on Türkiye-Asia relations, foreign policies of Asian countries and regional cooperation.





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Lt-Gen (rtd) Datuk Johnny Lim Eng Seng

Malaysian Armed Forces

Lim was involved in numerous operations towards the tail-end of the second Malaysian Emergency (1968-90) in the peninsula and Sarawak. He was appointed as commandant of the National Resilience College in January 2024 and promoted to his present post in May 2025. He is a regular speaker on command, leadership and management as well as security issues at military and government institutions.



Dr Kadir Temiz

President

Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (ORSAM), Türkiye

Temiz teaches politics of East Asia, China in world politics and Chinese foreign policy at İstanbul Medeniyet University. He is a former assistant professor at İstanbul Şehir University's Department of Political Science and International Relations and Fulbright visiting scholar at George Washington University. He is the author of *Chinese Foreign Policy Toward the Middle East*.



Dr Kogila Balakrishnan

Director of Policy and Engagement, Business Development (Southeast Asia)
Warwick Manufacturing Group
University of Warwick, United Kingdom

Kogila is an internationally recognised scholar-practitioner in defence procurement, industrial participation and sovereign capability development. She is the author of *Technology Offsets in International Defence Procurement* and co-author of *Asia-Pacific Defence and Security Outlook: Arming the Region in the Era of Great Power Competition*. Her work focuses on technology transfer, localisation and implementation of defence industrial policy, advising governments and defence organisations globally.



Assoc Prof Dr Murat Aslan

Researcher
Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

Aslan's research focuses on security and defence studies, conflict resolution, intelligence and propaganda practices. He had been commissioned to Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia, facilitating the comparison of theory and practice when he was in service. His main interest is the Middle East, primarily areas surrounding Türkiye. He is the author of *Security Sector Reform for Libya: A Crucial Step Towards State Building* and *Intelligence and Propaganda in the Cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan*.





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Dr Mustafa Caner

Foreign Policy Researcher

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

Caner is an assistant professor at Sakarya University's Middle East Institute (ORMER), editor-in-chief of *Kriter* magazine and a researcher at SETA. His research focuses on Iranian politics, Türkiye-Iran relations and Türkiye-Middle East relations. He is the former deputy director of ORMER and currently serves as a board member. At Sakarya University, he teaches courses on Türkiye-Middle East relations, Turkish foreign policy and political science.



Dr Raihan Ismail

Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies

University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Raihan convenes the contemporary Islamic studies programme at the Middle East Centre, St Antony's College. She was elected a corresponding fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities in 2024. She is the co-recipient of the 2018 Max Crawford Medal, awarded by the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She is the author of *Saudi Clerics and Shia Islam* and *Rethinking Salafism: The Transnational Networks of Salafi 'Ulama in Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia*, winner of the 2024 Muslim World Book Award.





Rıfat Öncel

Researcher

Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research (SETA), Türkiye

Öncel specialises in defence policy, security cooperation and nuclear strategy with a regional focus on the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean seas. He has written extensively on these subjects, co-authoring *Security, Defence, and Armament in the Middle East*. He had also led research projects on contemporary defence issues, such as emerging military technologies and the security implications of the Ukraine war. He is currently focused on the challenges of Nato ahead of the Ankara Summit in July 2026.



Siti Farhana Sheikh Yahya

News Anchor

Astro Awani, Malaysia

Farhana presents *Awani International*, Astro's flagship English news segment analysing global power shifts and geopolitical rivalries shaping the international order. She also hosts the weekly talk show *It's About Youth*, leading discussions with diverse guests on issues central to young Malaysians. Her expertise extends across the organisation, contributing to major programmes, including Awani Global and Agenda Awani.





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Thomas Daniel

Director of Foreign Policy and Security Studies
Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Thomas has more than a decade's experience in foreign policy and security analysis. His work focuses on how major power dynamics impact on the strategic-security considerations of Southeast Asia. Within this scope, he mainly looks at the South China Sea dispute, political-security cohesion within ASEAN and Malaysia's security and foreign policies. He also focuses on policies towards refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia and ASEAN's response to the Myanmar crisis.



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