

International seminar & workshop

Post-war

Aleppo:

Urban Reconstruction between  
Hopes and Challenges

ITU Taskisla Campus

6 May 2026

Hall 126 & Room 129

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# EVENT SUMMARY

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This event is designed to explore critical academic pathways for the post-war reconstruction of Aleppo, with a strong emphasis on community-driven recovery. Successful reconstruction must go **beyond rebuilding** to foster sustainable communities, effective governance, economic recovery, social cohesion, and civic life.

While funding is crucial, challenges in governance, socio-cultural dynamics, and political stability persist. Recovery should be rapid yet inclusive, participatory, and **locally grounded** to restore cultural identity.

The event discussions will emphasize **three critical types of “bridges”** necessary for sustainable rebuilding across different spatial scales:

- **Physical bridges:** rebuilding infrastructure and urban spaces.
- **Institutional bridges:** establishing effective governance and administrative systems.
- **Socio-cultural bridges:** restoring community ties, local identity, and cultural heritage.

*Event Language: English*

## • Aim

**This event aims** to shape discussions around key recovery scenarios for Aleppo that prioritize:

- The return of displaced populations.
- The restoration of normal living conditions through the reconstruction of housing, schools, and hospitals.
- The rehabilitation of historic sites as symbols of continuity and **collective identity**.

## • Format

- **Seminars:** guest lectures offering insights into urban reconstruction, community recovery, and heritage preservation.
- **Workshop:** discussions and exercises to develop a comprehensive framework for reconstructing Aleppo as an integrated city, linking the historic centre with damaged suburban areas.

## • Expected Outcomes

- **Practice-oriented** recommendations for sustainable post-war reconstruction
- **Community-driven** initiatives promoting social cohesion, local identity, collective memory, and public space revitalization.

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# EVENT PROGRAM

# SEMINAR

- 10:00 - 10:10** ● **Opening**  
Prof. Dr. Mehmet Küçükmehtetoğlu  
(ITU), Dean
- 10:10 - 11:00** ● **Session 1**  
**Aleppo Historic Core and Surrounding:**  
*Post-War Design for Social Sustainability: The Role of Community Participatory Design in Reconstruction of Aleppo*  
Prof. Dr. Salah Haj Ismail  
Yildirim Beyazit University
- 11:00 - 11:10** ● **Break**
- 11:10 - 12:00** ● **Session 2**  
**Urban Level- Metropolitan Area:**  
*Future Visions for Strengthening the Connection between the City and its Countryside within the Aleppo Governorate Reconstruction Plan*  
Prof. Dr. Hala Malandi  
University of Aleppo
- 12:00 - 12:30** ● **Discussion**  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lana Kudumoviç  
(ITU) – Moderator
- 12:30 - 13:30** ● **Lunch Break**

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# WORKSHOP

13:30 - 17:00

## Working Session

### Academic Staff & Panelists:

Prof. Dr. Salah Haj Ismail (Yildirim Beyazit University)

Prof. Dr. Hala Malandi (University of Aleppo)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lana Kudumoviç (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Muhammed Ziya Paköz (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ömer Dabanlı (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Gün (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatih Eren (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yasin Bektaş (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Numan Kılınç (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ferhat Pakdamar (ITU)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ruba Kasmó (ITU)

Dr. Sabina Mujkić (INTA)

*Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia*

Azem Feriz (MA)

*Center for Research on Islamic Culture and Tradition;*

*Majlis of the Islamic Community Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina*

### Program Assistant:

Mahmut Medenioğlu, MA

### Participants:

Graduate and Undergraduate Students

17:00 - 18:00

## Discussion and Closing

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# SPEAKER PROFILES

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**Prof. Dr.  
Hala  
Malandi**



Hala Malandi is a Professor, the head of the Urban Planning department and the Dean of the Faculty of Architecture at Aleppo University. She holds BA in architecture, at University of Aleppo, Syria, and Diploma in Town Planning from same University. She took her M.Sc in Urban Planning and Development, School of Planning and Architecture, Manchester University, England and Ph.D. in 2005 at the School of the Built Environment, Liverpool John Moores University, England .

Her research interest covers topics such as Urban and Regional Planning, Sustainable Development, Stakeholders; Regional Planning in Syria, Urban Renewal; Rehabilitation of Squares in Old Cities of Aleppo etc.

**Prof. Dr.  
Salah Haj  
Ismail**



Salah Haj Ismail is a professor at Ankara Yildirim Beyazit University and head of department of architecture.

He was born in Aleppo - Syria 1979, is an architect since 2002 with a Master in Architecture and a Master in civil engineering from Aleppo University, and a Ph.D. in Cultural Heritage from Politecnico di Torino, Italy (2011).

Forced to leave his country, worked in Universidad de Cantabria- Santander – Spain, Sapienza University of Rome - Italy, before moving to work as full professor in Türkiye.

His research fields include emergency architecture for humanity, post war/disaster recovery and development, rural areas development and the management of cultural heritage for post-crisis recovery.

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# SPEECH ABSTRACT

# **Future Visions for Strengthening the Connection between the City and its Countryside within the Aleppo Governorate Reconstruction Plan**

**Prof. Dr. Hala Malandi**

This research addresses the challenges of rebuilding the city of Aleppo and its surrounding countryside in the post-war period, through an analysis of the urban and demographic transformations that the governorate has undergone as a result of years of conflict. The city of Aleppo suffered extensive damage to its infrastructure, including transportation, water, and electricity networks, in addition to significant damage to residential buildings and public and service facilities. This led to a decline in the city's functional efficiency and a substantial reduction in its capacity. Similarly, the Aleppo countryside was not spared the effects of the war, suffering from destruction of its urban infrastructure and widespread population displacement, resulting in an imbalance between the city and its rural surroundings.

Following the end of the war, gradual waves of population return began, but this return was unbalanced, concentrated largely in the city of Aleppo at the expense of the countryside, due to the lack of services and job opportunities in rural areas. This led to a set of new urban challenges, most notably overcrowding within the city, increased pressure on already damaged infrastructure, exacerbated transportation crises and traffic congestion, and a surge in demand for housing and services, further complicating the urban scene.

This research is based on the fundamental premise that the reconstruction of Aleppo cannot be limited to rebuilding what was destroyed; rather, it must include a comprehensive planning vision that addresses the structural imbalances between the city and the countryside, restoring equilibrium between them. Accordingly, this research aims to present a set of planning scenarios that contribute to alleviating pressure on the city and improving the situation in rural areas to achieve balanced development across the governorate as a whole.

The research employs an analytical-planning approach, combining a study of the current situation with an assessment of existing problems, culminating in the formulation of practical strategic solutions within the context of reconstruction. It also highlights the importance of integrating urban, economic, and social policies to achieve sustainable development.

The research concludes that the success of Aleppo's reconstruction is linked to the ability of planners and decision-makers to adopt a comprehensive vision that goes beyond partial solutions and works to restructure the relationship between the city and the countryside, in order to ensure spatial balance, improve the quality of life for the population, and enhance the city's resilience in the face of future challenges.

# Post-War Design for Social Sustainability: The Role of Community Participatory Design in Reconstruction of Aleppo

**Prof. Dr. Salah Haj Ismail**

Buildings are the traditional output of architectural design, and architects are responsible for producing sustainable spaces and places. Within a social context, this thinking is defined by the architect's creative role in delivering the quality necessary for buildings to meet their socioeconomic goals. In a post war context this task become more complex and crucial, because it seeks not only the physical reconstruction, but also social, community, management and urban reconstruction and development.

Designing for social sustainability requires architects to consider a community's lifestyle and customs as much as they consider how the individuals within that community understand the concept of sustainability. This challenge has shifted how architects view the sustainable design of community buildings; community consultation has become the primary tool for integrating local insights into the design and management process. In Aleppo, after a devastating decade of conflicts, the social constructivist philosophy of this research defines a new approach to building design, one driven by the Aleppo community's interests. A community-based participatory design helps architects use epistemological assumptions to deliver a sustainable design decision-making process. Furthermore, this presentation highlights the importance of community buildings as a vital tool for creating sustainable, people-oriented buildings that meet the social needs of the community in the process of reconstruction and development.

**Keywords:** *Sustainable Management, Community-based Design, Post War Social Sustainability, Resilient Urbanism.*