

In this week's edition of Türkiye in Focus, we delve into the following topics:

- Devlet Bahçeli's parliamentary speeches continue to influence the political climate, placing the Kurdish question at the forefront of Türkiye's agenda.
- Researcher Çağdaş Yüksel provided an analysis of what a potential second term for Donald Trump could mean for Türkiye.
- President Erdoğan participated in the Turkic States Organisation meeting held in Kyrgyzstan.

## New Phase in the Kurdish Question: Bahçeli Continues to Set the Agenda

For the past month, Türkiye's political scene has been dominated by the new phase surrounding the Kurdish question, initiated by the MHP leader. This new phase has swiftly become central to daily discussions, with the MHP leader taking on a prominent role as a key influencer in shaping domestic dynamics. Each Tuesday, Bahçeli's parliamentary speeches are highly anticipated, as he continues to shape the political landscape with notable assessments and proposals.

This week, just a day before Bahçeli's anticipated address, the mayors of Batman, Mardin, and Halfeti—municipalities led by the DEM Party—were dismissed by the Ministry of Interior and subsequently arrested on terror-related charges, with trustees appointed in their stead. The DEM Party had considered these recent appointments as significant developments for the Kurdish community. Therefore, the removal of these mayors has sparked discussions about the sustainability of this new phase. The recent trustee appointments carry added symbolic weight, given that Mardin's arrested Mayor Ahmet Türk, a leading pro-dialogue figure in the DEM Party, and Halfeti, whose mayor was removed due to pro-terror activities, are focal points: Türk's influence represents a pro-dialogue stance, while Halfeti is the birthplace of imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

Following the appointments on Monday, all eyes turned to Bahçeli's regular Tuesday address. Reiterating his earlier suggestion to invite Öcalan to parliament, Bahçeli stated that the dismissed mayors should wait for the legal proceedings to conclude. While backing the trustee appointments, his remarks subtly suggest that the measure could be temporary.

Meanwhile, DEM Party and CHP leaders have shown a coordinated response to the trustee appointments. CHP leader Özgür



(Emin Sansar - Anadolu Agency)

Özel postponed his pre-scheduled program to attend protests outside Mardin municipality. Yet, sensitivities within CHP regarding the Kurdish Dossier remain pronounced. The party's various factions—leftist, liberal, and nationalist—have displayed conflicting responses to these developments. Recently, some figures within CHP with nationalist leanings have appeared on television, increasingly critical of CHP leadership and Özgür Özel's approach to the Kurdish question.

In light of these developments, the official approach to the Kurdish question remains at a critical juncture, with Bahçeli's role as a potential architect of domestic policy emerging as an important factor. This complex interplay between political actors suggests that the path forward will be shaped by ongoing dialogue and fluctuating alliances.

## Trump's Victory and Its Implications for Türkiye



(Murat Kaynak - Anadolu Agency)

Researcher Çağdaş Yüksel discusses the new era following the US elections in the context of Türkiye-US relations.

Millions of voters in the United States have cast their ballots, choosing between Democratic candidate Kamala Harris and Republican candidate Donald J. Trump. According to preliminary results, Trump has secured 292 electoral votes, surpassing Harris's 224. Winning in 27 out of 50 states and painting all critical swing states red, Trump emerged victorious. The Republicans also declared victory in both the Senate and the House of Representatives, seizing control of Congress. As Trump returns to the Oval Office as the 47th President of the United States after a four-year gap, there is anticipation about the future trajectory of U.S.-Türkiye relations under his leadership.

Looking back, the U.S. often pursued a foreign policy that tested the limits of the alliance with Türkiye during both Trump's first term and the Biden/Harris administration. However, the Republican Party's traditional focus on strategic rather than ideological concerns, combined with President Trump's close personal relationship with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, offers a more favourable outlook for Türkiye under Trump's victory.

After the 2023 Turkish presidential election, Trump extended his congratulations to Erdoğan on his Truth Social platform, saying, "Congratulations to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on his well-deserved victory in Türkiye. I know him well; he is a friend, and I have witnessed firsthand how much he loves his country and elevates Türkiye's reputation!" In response to this sincere message, President Erdoğan congratulated Trump on his return to the White House, writing on his X account, "Congratulations to my friend Donald Trump, who won the U.S. presidential election after a great struggle and became President again."

These mutually friendly messages highlight the positive relationship between the two leaders, providing a hopeful perspective for the future of U.S.-Türkiye bilateral relations.

In essence, Erdoğan also expressed his expectations for the future of U.S.-Türkiye relations in his congratulatory message to President Trump. On X, he wrote, "I hope for the strengthening of Türkiye-US relations and for an end to the crises and wars on a regional and global scale, starting with the Palestinian issue and the Russia-Ukraine war. I believe greater efforts will be made for a more just world." This statement reflects expectations not only for bilateral relations but also for global peace and stability in the coming period.

However, considering the support that President Trump provided to Israel during his first term and throughout the 2024 election campaign, it can be inferred that bilateral relations might face some bumps in the future. Trump has even accused the Biden/Harris administration—known for its unwavering support for Israel and complicity in the genocide against Palestinians—of being a supporter of Hamas, signalling that Israel would receive even greater support under his leadership. In this context, aside from the Palestinian issue, which garners significant sympathy from the Turkish public, there remains uncertainty about how Trump would approach the Syrian situation, particularly his stance on the terrorist organisation PYD, which poses a direct threat to Türkiye's security.

Additionally, Trump's reduced support for Ukraine and his tolerance of Russia's expansionist designs in the region could irk Ankara, which focuses on preserving Ukraine's territorial integrity and striving for a just peace.

During his first term, Trump prioritised bilateral agreements over multilateral ones, demonstrating a preference for removing barriers like trade tariffs, which could create economic cooperation opportunities between the U.S. and Türkiye. In this new term, Trump might take a more positive approach toward Türkiye's defence needs, potentially increasing collaboration in strategic areas like defence industries and the energy sector. In this context, Türkiye could also consider actively negotiating carbon-based regulations related to steel and aluminium trade. However, in the event of an economic conflict with China, the Trump administration would likely disapprove of Türkiye's procurement of electronic goods from China and of Beijing's investments in Türkiye.

Trump's return to the U.S. presidency brings both opportunities and risks for U.S.-Türkiye relations. Türkiye's demands for the acquisition of F-35s and the lifting of CAATSA sanctions remain intertwined with the complex S-400 dossier. The close relationship between Trump and Erdoğan could open doors for cooperation and dialogue, but Trump's unique, unpredictable diplomatic style and ambivalent policies—along with his increased control over Congress compared to his first term—may lead to a more complex outlook in the bilateral relations.

## Organisation of Turkic States Convened in Bishkek

Founded in 2009, the Organisation of Turkic States (OTS) rapidly expands its sphere of influence. The final declaration of the fifteenth anniversary of its founding included the establishment of the Council of Central Banks of the Organisation of Turkic States and an emphasis on increasing cooperation in the field of digital economy. The President of Kazakhstan, Cömert Tokayev, stressed the development of the OTS with these words: "The Organization of Turkic States has become a respected organisation in a short time. Its role in the world has strengthened. This is the success of our unity and common strength."

One of the participants of the summit was President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The most striking part of Erdoğan's speech was his [statement](#) that international institutions have lost their function and the United Nations Security Council is unable to take decisions. He underlined that the Turkish world has important duties in such a dysfunctional international order. In this context, he also mentioned Israel's wars of aggression in Gaza and Lebanon. At the same time, Erdoğan emphasised the importance of the presence of the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Ersin Tatar at the meeting and said that the support of the Turkic world is important for a fair solution of the Cyprus problem.



### Highlights

- Turkish defence industry company ASELSAN is taking part in EURONVAL in Paris, where it is showcasing the GÖKSUR 100 N air defence system for the first time at the event.
- Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan is in Athens. Prior to his visit, Fidan emphasized the growing diplomatic relations between the two countries.

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