

In this week’s Türkiye in Focus, we cover the following topics:

- President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan delivered speeches with key messages.
- Devlet Bahçeli’s parliamentary group meeting once again captured public attention.
- The Beşiktaş – Maccabi Tel Aviv match will be held in Hungary.
- Several celebrities were detained during an operation targeting illegal betting sites.

Important Messages from Erdoğan: Signs of New Developments in Southern Borders

The cabinet, led by President Erdoğan, gathered on Sunday, November 10, at the Çankaya Palace, marking the first time in nine years that a cabinet meeting was held at this historic location. The timing of the meeting, coinciding with the anniversary of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s death, adds layers of symbolic significance. In 2015, the Presidential Office moved from Çankaya Palace—formerly used by Atatürk—to the new Presidential Complex, drawing criticism that the AK Party administration was distancing itself from the republic’s legacy. Addressing these criticisms in his speech, Erdoğan described efforts to contrast the two sites as an act of “sowing discord.”

One of the most highly anticipated aspects of the President’s speech was his response to MHP leader’s comments on the Kurdish question. Addressing the recent dismissal of some mayors on terror-related charges, Erdoğan emphasised that there would be no tolerance for any political ties to terrorism. In a separate speech later that day, he alluded to potential new developments aimed at addressing gaps in the buffer zone along Türkiye’s southern borders, suggesting both political and military measures. Given this, it is likely that a combination of political manoeuvres—both domestically and internationally, particularly with the new Trump Administration—along with military actions in Syria and Iraq, could unfold in the days ahead.



(Tur Presidency / Murat Kula - Anadolu Agency)

Another key moment in Erdoğan’s speech was his first public indication that he might seek re-election. His coalition partner, Devlet Bahçeli, had raised the idea the previous week, expressing a desire for Erdoğan to serve another term. Erdoğan added his voice to the conversation, stating, “As long as God grants me life and the nation gives approval, we will continue to serve.” However, under the current constitution, the incumbent president cannot run for another term unless an early election is held. The presidential remark is therefore viewed as signalling potential discussions on constitutional changes and the possibility of an early election.

Did Bahçeli Soften His Tone?

Devlet Bahçeli continued his messaging this week, maintaining the firm position he has held since early October. His speech reaffirmed his strong opposition to terrorism while reiterating his call for “embracing our Kurdish brothers” and stressing the importance of dialogue. On the other hand, his assertion that politics and arms cannot coexist was widely interpreted as backing the recent trustee appointments. However, his characterisation of these removals as “temporary” suggests that the possibility of political reconciliation remains open.

One of the main points of interest was his emphasis on shifting global dynamics, particularly in the Middle East—a theme President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has also been addressing recently. On the other hand, in response to a journalist’s question, Bahçeli firmly dismissed rumours of disagreements among alliance partners. On Thursday, the President and the MHP leader met to discuss the latest developments.

UEFA Europa League Beşiktaş – Maccabi Tel Aviv Match to Be Played in Hungary

The Europa League match between one of Türkiye’s leading football clubs, Beşiktaş, and Maccabi Tel Aviv, scheduled for November 28, will take place in Debrecen, Hungary. This decision was announced by UEFA as follows: “The UEFA Europa League match between Beşiktaş and Maccabi Tel-Aviv on 28 November 2024 will take place at the Nagyerdei Stadion in Debrecen, Hungary, following a decision by the Turkish authorities not to stage it in Türkiye.”



(Berk Özkan - Anadolu Agency)

Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters were caught on camera chanting racist slogans in the streets of Amsterdam before and after their team’s match against AJAX, attacking private property and some Palestinian flags belonging to Dutch citizens. Following this aggression, several Maccabi Tel Aviv supporters were injured in the resulting incidents.

The Turkish public is deeply sensitive to the massacres committed by Israel in Gaza. As a result, Turkish authorities chose to request that the game be held in neutral territory due to the heightened security concerns surrounding the event.

UEFA’s failure to take action against Israel, despite its genocidal war on Gaza that has claimed tens of thousands of civilian lives, stands in stark contrast to the embargo imposed on Russian teams since the onset of Russia’s war in Ukraine, fuelling accusations of double standards. Additionally, Israel’s participation in European tournaments, despite being geographically outside Europe, is often seen as a politically motivated arrangement.

Operation Against Illegal Betting Sites

Türkiye has recently been grappling with an illegal betting epidemic. Ongoing investigations and operations have [uncovered](#) the circulation of large sums of money within illegal betting networks. This week, a new police operation led to the arrest of several Turkish celebrities, who were allegedly involved—either knowingly or unknowingly—in promoting certain foreign-based betting sites. The operation follows a

series of measures implemented by Turkish authorities as illegal betting and gambling have become significant revenue sources for organised crime syndicates.

Operating casinos has been banned in Türkiye since 1998, and betting and games of chance are strictly controlled by the state. However, in recent years, some foreign-based betting sites have increased their activities targeting Türkiye.



(Cemal Yurttaş - Anadolu Agency)

Highlights

- Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [attended](#) the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Arab League Extraordinary Joint Summit in Saudi Arabia.
- President Erdoğan [participated](#) in the COP 29 meeting held in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- British Defence Minister John Healey visited Türkiye on 14 November to discuss the sale of 40 Eurofighter jets to Ankara, among other subjects. Turkish military sources have confirmed that Germany has given its sales authority the go-ahead to work on the deal.

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