

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

- Bahçeli proposed a visit to İmralı Island as part of renewed efforts to address the Kurdish question.
- The graduation ceremony of young lieutenants continues to spark controversy.
- Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is on trial for insulting the President, amid ongoing leadership tensions within the CHP.
- Opposition forces in Idlib launched a major offensive against regime targets in Syria.

Bahçeli’s First Concrete Proposal for the New Process

Devlet Bahçeli’s weekly parliamentary group speeches on Tuesdays continue to capture significant attention. This week, Bahçeli reiterated his earlier remarks and, for the first time, suggested a concrete action: representatives from the DEM Party should visit İmralı Island to meet face-to-face with PKK figure Abdullah Öcalan.

Following his statement, the DEM Party officially applied to the Ministry of Justice for permission to visit İmralı. The ministry has yet to respond, but a potential meeting could mark a new step in the process.

Meanwhile, Ufuk Uras, a leftist politician who has previously been involved in efforts to address the Kurdish question, visited both the MHP and prominent DEM Party figure Ahmet Türk. Although no formal meetings between the two parties have taken place, dialogue appears to be continuing through various channels.



(Betül Abalı - Anadolu Agency)

Controversy Surrounding the Lieutenants Graduates

The graduation ceremony of newly commissioned young lieutenants from the military academy sparked significant debate. During the ceremony, some of the young officers recited the now-obsolete oath after the official swearing-in and shouted the slogan, “We are Mustafa Kemal’s Soldiers.”

This slogan is often linked to secular nationalist political circles, sparking renewed debates about the politicisation of the military and recalling its historical meddling in Turkish politics. It is important to note that Türkiye has faced a century of military tutelage and interference since the republic’s founding. The military issued ultimatums and staged direct coups in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997, overthrowing elected governments. Thankfully, their influence has diminished over time, with recent failures, such as the 2007 memorandum and the 2016 coup attempt.

The controversy resurfaced this week as the disciplinary committee proceedings for these lieutenants began. While the CHP leadership expressed support for the young officers, the

government emphasised that no tolerance would be shown for indiscipline within the armed forces. Addressing the matter during his AK Party parliamentary group speech, President Erdoğan criticised the CHP’s stance, referring to Türkiye’s tumultuous history with military coups.



(Emin Sansar - Anadolu Agency)

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu’s Trial

The first hearing in the case against former CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, accused of insulting the President, took place



(CHP - Anadolu Agency)

this week. Kılıçdaroğlu declared that he would make a political defence, calling on opposition groups to rally in his support.

Since losing control of the party to Özgür Özel at the recent congress, Kılıçdaroğlu has been openly critical of the new CHP leadership. Rumours suggest that he may aim to reclaim his position. Despite this situation, senior CHP officials attended the hearing to show solidarity with him. Notably absent, however, was Ekrem İmamoğlu—widely regarded as a potential opposition presidential candidate—who cited another engagement as the reason for his nonattendance.

Tensions between the CHP’s old and new guard occasionally emerge, along with speculation about competition among mayors for the presidential candidacy. These conflicts are reflected in various statements and signals.

Opposition Forces in Idlib Launch Offensive Against Syrian Regime

Opposition forces in Syria’s Idlib have launched military operations targeting regime-controlled areas, reclaiming significant territories in the process.

Türkiye has faced numerous challenges linked to the Syrian uprising, including a massive influx of displaced Syrians and security concerns along its southern border. While Türkiye has shown support to opposition groups, President Erdoğan has recently called for dialogue with Syrian regime leader Bashar al-Assad on multiple occasions. Military developments in the Western Aleppo region are being closely monitored by Ankara.



(İzettin Kasım - Anadolu Agency)

Highlights

- The TRT World Forum will take place in Istanbul on November 29-30, under the theme “A World at the Breaking Point: Managing Crises and Transformations.” The event is set to host over 1,500 participants and nearly 150 speakers from more than 30 countries.
- Türkiye’s media watchdog, RTÜK, fined opposition news channels and TV dramas after President Erdoğan criticised certain series. The President condemned bigoted portrayals of religious figures and religious attire. Erdoğan argued that recent media content targets religious values and individuals and undermines societal harmony.
- UK Police arrest six individuals over PKK-Related activities

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