

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

- Israel's attack on the *Madleen* ship, which carried two pro-Palestinian Turkish activists, sparked strong reactions in Türkiye.
- The strike at İzmir Municipality introduced a new dimension to internal debates within the CHP.
- Researcher Hüseyin Özdemir evaluated the second round of the Istanbul talks between Ukraine and Russia.

## Türkiye's Response to the Attack on the *Madleen* Ship

Millions of people in Türkiye and around the world are calling for Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza to stop. The Freedom Flotilla Coalition launched a new initiative spearheaded by the ship *Madleen*, named after Gaza's only female fisherwoman, Madleen Kullab. The vessel departed from Italy, carrying 12 pro-Palestinian activists and humanitarian aid, with the goal of breaking Israel's illegal blockade on Gaza. However, before it could reach Gazan waters, Israel unlawfully seized the ship in international waters and detained the activists.

Among the 12 people on board were two Turkish activists: one a German citizen, Yasemin Acar, and the other a Turkish citizen, Şuayb Ordu. According to media sources, both were released and left Israel after being detained aboard the humanitarian vessel *Madleen*. Nonetheless, the Turkish public remains deeply sensitive to the issue of Palestine, with broad concern cutting across political and social divides.

In 2009, the *Mavi Marmara* ship, which had set out from Türkiye to break the blockade and deliver aid to Gaza, was attacked by the Israeli military, resulting in the killing of 10 Turkish activists. That incident left a lasting mark on Türkiye's collective memory.



(Abdalkem Abu Riash - Anadolu Agency)

The assault on the *Madleen* has also provoked widespread outrage across Turkish society and within the state. Solidarity demonstrations were held in major cities, including Istanbul and Ankara. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the incident as a violation of international law and referred to Israel as a "terror state" in its official statement.

## The Identity Crisis Within the CHP Exposed by the İzmir Strike

A recent strike in the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, led by the leftist DİSK union, drew attention to growing tensions within Türkiye's political opposition. Workers demanded equal pay for equal work, protesting the wage disparities among employees performing the same duties. The slogan of the strike, "equal pay for equal work," quickly gained traction. However, İzmir's CHP-affiliated mayor Cemil Tugay took a



(Tezcan Ekizler - Anadolu Agency)

confrontational stance, bypassing the strike by collecting accumulated garbage in the city with other district mayors in front of cameras. Tugay did not stop there; he also criticised the workers very harshly in his media appearances.

The strike also sparked debates within media circles close to the Republican People's Party (CHP). While some commentators accused the workers of provocation and harming the party's image, others, typically aligned with more leftist views, defended the workers' demands as legitimate and condemned the dismissive approach. The event underscored a broader ideological rift within the CHP, reflecting the ongoing tensions between its liberal and social democratic factions. These internal fractures become particularly visible during moments of crisis.

As the second-largest political party in Türkiye, the CHP continues to position itself as a viable alternative to the ruling government, striving to unite various ideological groups under a common goal. However, incidents like the İzmir strike highlight the party's ongoing identity crisis. At the same time, this case demonstrated that core principles, such as labour rights—which have historically been central to the party's platform—can be sidelined when they conflict with the demands of electoral strategy or public image.

## Prisoner Swap Emerges from Second Round of Istanbul Talks Between Ukraine and Russia

The second round of Ukraine-Russia talks resulted in a prisoner exchange agreement. Researcher Hüseyin Özdemir shared his views on the meeting and its outcomes.

The latest round of talks in Istanbul, once again convened through Türkiye's determined mediation, has resulted in a notable humanitarian breakthrough: both Ukrainian and Russian delegations have agreed to a new exchange of prisoners, prioritising young and seriously ill soldiers, as well as the dignified return of fallen soldiers' bodies to their respective homelands. Although the prospect of an immediate and comprehensive peace remains the ultimate aspiration for all parties involved, it is important to acknowledge that the resolution of such a deeply entrenched and multifaceted conflict inevitably demands patience, perseverance, and incremental progress. The very act of both sides coming to the table, engaging in dialogue, and reaching consensus on sensitive issues should be seen as laying the essential bricks on the long and arduous road towards peace.

Every step towards dialogue and mutual understanding brings the possibility of a lasting settlement closer. In this sense, each agreement reached in Istanbul stands as a testament to the power of persistent negotiation and the hope that, with time, even the most complex conflicts can find a path to resolution.



(Ukrayna Cumhurbaşkanlığı - Anadolu Agency)

### Highlights

- President Erdoğan announced that the 48 fifth-generation KAN fighter jets, to be produced within 120 months, will be exported to Indonesia. The deal is expected to generate between \$12 Billion and \$15 Billion.
- Manisa Metropolitan Mayor Ferdi Zeyrek died after being electrocuted at his home. An investigation into the incident is ongoing.
- Türkiye's official reserve assets rose by 1.8% in the week ending June 5 to \$155.9 billion, the fifth consecutive weekly increase, according to data from the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT).

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