

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*;

- President Erdoğan delivered significant messages on the anniversary of the Battle of Malazgirt.
- National Intelligence Organisation (MİT) Director İbrahim Kalın visited Eastern Libya. Researcher Ferhat Polat examined this development.
- TEKNOFEST Kicks Off in Istanbul with "Blue Homeland" Theme.

Malazgirt's Victory: A Millennium-Old Legacy Illuminating Today



The 954th anniversary of the Battle of Malazgirt was commemorated with a ceremony in Malazgirt, marking the decisive 1071 victory that symbolises the Turks' entry into Anatolia. This historic milestone has increasingly been framed not only as a cultural celebration but also as a functional reference point for shaping today's political and social foundations. By linking this distant past to present-day debates, political leaders continue to underline Malazgirt's symbolic role in building a narrative of unity, continuity, and resilience.

President Erdoğan once again attended this year's commemoration and, much like in previous years, delivered significant remarks that were consistent with his earlier speeches at the same event. In one of the most striking passages, he declared: "Today, the foundational will that has shaped Anatolia with love, embracing Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Sunnis, and Alevis, is present here." This inclusive framing positioned Anatolia's founding spirit as one forged through the shared contributions of diverse communities. It was also a deliberate reminder that Türkiye's unity rests not on singularity but on a deeply pluralist foundation.

A key element of Erdoğan's address was his emphasis on the goal of a "Terror-Free Türkiye," followed by a broader vision of a "Terror-Free Region." Referring to Iraq, Syria, and the Balkans, he underlined that Türkiye has always been

a place of refuge for the oppressed, explicitly extending this protection to the Kurds of Syria. This message carries several implications. First, it signals a constructive approach toward the resolution of disputes between the SDG/YPG and Damascus, stressing that the search for solutions through outside Powers -particularly Israel's destabilising role in Syria- will remain futile. Second, it reflects Türkiye's wider regional strategy: positioning itself as a stabilising power across the Middle East, Balkans, Caucasus, and even Africa. Within this framework, the push for a "Terror-Free Türkiye" should be read as part of a broader vision of regional order and integration.

This year's speech also gains further meaning when compared to last year's political landscape. When Erdoğan emphasised Turkish-Kurdish-Arab unity at Malazgirt in 2024, MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli had not yet delivered his groundbreaking speeches that helped shape the "Terror-Free Türkiye" agenda. This sequence of events demonstrates that the process cannot be reduced, as some analysts suggest, to a Bahçeli-driven initiative imposed on the AK Party. Rather, it reflects a deeper and more continuous state policy that has been unfolding over time. Such continuity reinforces the notion that Malazgirt commemorations function as platforms for articulating long-term strategic visions.

Another notable element of this year's commemoration was the presence of Malazgirt's DEM Party mayor, representing a Kurdish-majority constituency, who was seen conversing with Erdoğan and Bahçeli during the celebrations. Moreover, DEM Party co-chair Tuncer Bakırhan remarked that Malazgirt itself represents a historic beginning of Turkish-Kurdish unity, suggesting that the symbolic meaning of this anniversary retains contemporary value. In this light, the state's effort to construct an inclusive discourse that explicitly embraces Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Sunnis, and Alevis as founding elements can be seen as a conscious attempt to move beyond identity-exclusive paradigms of the last century. By anchoring this pluralist narrative in deep historical roots, Türkiye's leaders seek to demonstrate that genuine unity arises not from uniformity but from the recognition of shared belonging across diverse identities.

Türkiye's Intelligence Chief Kalın Visits Eastern Libya

Researcher Ferhat Polat examined MİT Director İbrahim Kalın's unexpected meeting in Libya.

The head of Türkiye's National Intelligence Organisation (MIT), İbrahim Kalın, held a rare meeting with General Khalifa Haftar in Benghazi, marking the first high-level contact between Ankara and eastern Libya in years. While this meeting represents a significant development, it still warrants a cautious "wait-and-see" approach.

Türkiye's military role in Libya is both longstanding and extensive. Under the 2019 Military Training and Cooperation Agreement, Ankara has been training the armed forces of the UN-recognised Government of National Unity in Libya with the goal of transforming militias into a unified standing army integrated into state institutions. From the onset, however, Ankara has sought to build common ground between eastern and western Libya, promoting dialogue over conflict, and, with this visit, Ankara seeks to expand contacts with eastern authorities.

Looking ahead, Libya requires a comprehensive process of reconciliation and institutional building. Türkiye's stated objective is to support the rebuilding of state institutions and to facilitate a comprehensive national dialogue that



defines the foundations of the country's political system and social contract—rather than rushing into ill-prepared general elections that could risk further fragmentation. Against this backdrop, İbrahim Kalın's meeting with Haftar sends a constructive signal that rival factions, long in conflict for over a decade, could potentially be inching toward consensus, with Türkiye maintaining its efforts to guide both sides toward a political resolution of the divisions that have endured since Muammar Gaddafi's fall.

TEKNOFEST Blue Homeland Kicks Off

TEKNOFEST Blue Homeland, launched at the Istanbul Naval Shipyard Command, is designed to showcase Türkiye's technological strength at sea while engaging younger generations. Although it is not the main TEKNOFEST event—which will be held in September—this special concept highlights innovations in the defence industry, such as unmanned surface vehicles, underwater systems, and advanced engineering solutions. By focusing specifically on maritime defence technologies, the event represents the projection of the National Technology Initiative onto the seas, underscoring Türkiye's strategic emphasis on its maritime domain.



Highlights

- The Speaker of the Turkish Parliament has called for an extraordinary session on Friday to address Israel's attacks on Gaza, as well as the policies of genocide, oppression, and starvation.
- ASELSAN has delivered the first 47 vehicles of the Steel Dome air defence system, valued at \$460 million, marking its official entry into Türkiye's military inventory. Designed as an integrated national air defence network, the Steel Dome underscores Türkiye's growing role as a global defence player.
- Turkish First Lady Emine Erdoğan wrote a letter to U.S. First Lady Melania Trump, urging her to extend a hand of compassion to the children in Gaza, just as she did during the war in Ukraine. The letter received widespread coverage in the global media.

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