

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*;

- President Erdoğan participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit held in Tianjin, China.
- We conducted an interview with journalist Muhammed Ünalmiş to discuss Türkiye's recently announced defence technologies.
- Researcher Şeymanur Yönt provided a legal perspective on the new wave of the MeToo movement emerging in Türkiye.

President Erdoğan Attends Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit



(Mehmet Ali Özcan - Anadolu Agency)

President Erdoğan's characterisation of Türkiye as "the most Western Asian and the most Eastern European" underscored the symbolism of Türkiye being the sole NATO member represented at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Tianjin, held from August 31 to September 1, 2025. This framing reflects not only Türkiye's unique geopolitical identity but also the maturing version of its long-standing balance policy. Rather than belonging exclusively to one bloc, Türkiye increasingly emphasises its role as both a channel and an autonomous actor positioned between East and West.

For the past century, Türkiye has positioned itself as part of the Western world, while simultaneously cultivating an identity as a bridge between continents. In recent years, however, this policy has evolved into a more proactive and multidirectional foreign policy. Türkiye has expanded its engagement with

the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and even Latin America, steadily establishing itself as a regional and global player. Its participation in the SCO as a dialogue partner is emblematic of this broadened diplomatic vision.

Such initiatives enable Türkiye to build a diversified foreign policy portfolio while reinforcing its regional political depth. In Tianjin, Erdoğan's meetings with leaders from China, Russia, Iran, Pakistan, Armenia, and Azerbaijan underscored an intense diplomatic agenda. His emphasis on Syria's stability and strong condemnation of Israel's actions in Gaza highlighted Türkiye's intent to blend global engagement with principled positions on regional crises. This demonstrates how Türkiye's diplomacy seeks both wider partnerships and a stronger voice on pressing international issues.

Interview with Muhammed Ünalmiş on Türkiye's Newly Introduced Weapon Technologies

We interviewed defence researcher and journalist Muhammed Ünalmiş to discuss Türkiye's newly unveiled military technologies and their broader political implications.

At IDEF, Türkiye showcased state-of-the-art weapon systems such as Tayfun 4, Gökhan, and Hayalet. What technological features made them stand out, and how do they compare to their global counterparts?

The IDEF-2025 exhibition was far more than a platform to showcase Türkiye's latest defence innovations; it carried clear strategic messages directed both domestically and internationally. The systems unveiled by Turkish defence companies, alongside the agreements signed during the exhibition, underscored Türkiye's transition from a consumer of defence technologies to a producer and developer of highly advanced—and indeed strategic—capabilities that are rarely accessible even on global markets.

One of the most striking announcements came from Roketsan, which introduced the "Tayfun 4" hypersonic ballistic missile. While its actual range has not yet been disclosed, assessments indicate that it is capable of striking targets at long distances sufficient to deter any strategic threat against Türkiye. The mere revelation of such a system is a clear signal that Ankara has become a power with strategic deterrence capabilities, placing it among the select few nations worldwide to possess such technologies. Similarly, the unveiling of the long-range "Gökhan" air-to-air missile will provide the Turkish Air Force with the ability to engage hostile targets from unprecedented ranges, reshaping the balance of aerial superiority in the region. The Ministry of Defence also announced the development of the "GAZAB" bomb, designed to destroy heavily fortified positions, thereby equipping Turkish forces with an effective tool for high-intensity military scenarios.

Taken together, these systems demonstrate that only a very limited number of states are capable of producing such advanced ballistic, hypersonic, and long-range air-to-air missiles. Moreover, these weapons are not traded on open markets, even to states that can afford them, as they are strategic assets with the potential to alter the outcome of wars. In this regard, Türkiye's announcement of its development and possession of such capabilities signifies a new positioning as a central actor within both regional and global power dynamics.



(Esra Bilgin - Anadolu Agency)

In light of the recent 12-day conflict between Iran and Israel, how did Turkish defence officials and industry leaders evaluate the country's vulnerabilities and capabilities, and what key lessons emerged for strengthening Türkiye's defence posture in the event of a major regional war?

The messages of IDEF-2025 cannot be separated from the broader regional context. The recent 12-day conflict between Iran and Israel highlighted the critical importance of air defence, revealing that a state lacking advanced systems leaves its skies exposed and its strategic assets vulnerable to destruction. Furthermore, the absence of strategic weapons can leave states susceptible to external pressure or force them to accept conditions imposed by more powerful actors.

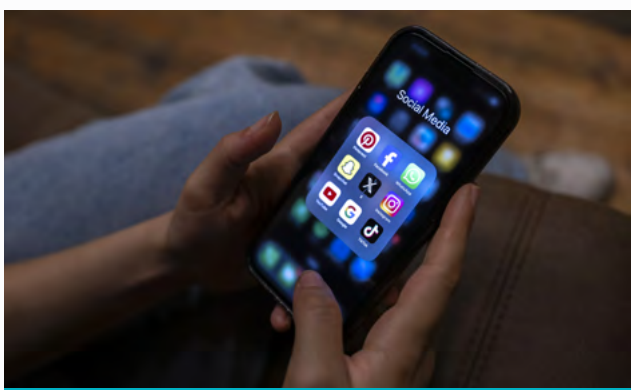
What impact could the unveiling of these weapons have on regional security dynamics? Could it also be interpreted as a strategic message from Türkiye on the international stage?

Against this backdrop, Ankara's unveiling of hypersonic ballistic missiles, advanced air defence systems, and long-range air-to-air missiles should be read as a direct signal to regional and international powers: Türkiye is no longer a "weak link" or an easy target but a state capable of imposing a credible deterrent posture. In light of Israel's ongoing escalation in Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, possessing advanced defence capabilities is no longer a matter of choice but a fundamental necessity for any state seeking to safeguard its sovereignty and protect its homeland and its people.

New Turkish MeToo Wave Shakes the Arts and Celebrity Community

Türkiye's art and celebrity circles have recently been shaken by a wave reminiscent of the #MeToo movement. Allegations against powerful figures in the industry have surfaced on social media, raising questions that remain legally complex. Researcher Şeymanur Yönt offers her analysis on the unfolding debate and its implications.

Recently, a social media movement similar to #MeToo has gained visibility in Türkiye, where individuals have shared their experiences of harassment and abuse, highlighting the systemic failures that need to be addressed. This movement created a space for those affected to break their silence, recognise that they are not alone, and find strength in solidarity. Given that speaking out is not easy, especially in societies where victims, often women, still face victim-blaming, public disclosures went beyond being mere personal testimonies and challenged the power of the accused who rely on silence. However, it is also important to remember that such disclosures exist outside of formal judicial processes. Even though they bring visibility to issues often hidden from public view, they carry the risk of "trial by social media", where



(Didem Mente - Anadolu Agency)

accusations can harm reputations and lives without the safeguards of due process.

In addition to their social impact, public disclosures also raised complex legal questions, especially on how to balance the rights of victims and the accused. Relatedly, a central debate sparked by the recent #MeToo movement concerned the often-misunderstood principle that "a woman's statement is essential." Legally, this means that a victim's testimony can be sufficient to initiate an investigation and may carry significant weight in the judicial process. However, this statement alone is probably not enough to secure a conviction; courts must consider the testimony in the context of the ordinary course of events and evaluate all available evidence in accordance with due process, ensuring that a fair and balanced assessment is made. In fact, this approach is grounded in an important social reality: in a context where many women remain silent due to family pressure or moral judgment, the fact that speaking out often entails the risk of social stigma underscores why such statements must, at a minimum, be taken seriously.

Another legal complexity that dominated the recent discussions was consent. Legally, consent must be given freely and explicitly; yet in practice, it is often difficult to prove and complicated by societal misconceptions such as the erroneous assumption that prior acquaintance or social interaction implies consent. Similarly, evidentiary hurdles are common since sexual crimes typically occur in private, with limited or no physical proof. Taking all of these factors into account, it is equally crucial to protect victims and provide them with a safe space to come forward, and to safeguard the presumption of innocence and the accused's right to a fair trial. For that, it is important to create a framework that allows victims to speak out while ensuring that justice is delivered through lawful and fair processes.

Highlights

- The Global Sumud Flotilla set sail from Tunisia to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza and to challenge Israel's unlawful blockade. The flotilla, which includes four MPs from Türkiye and numerous activists, is being closely followed by the Turkish public.
- Earlier this week, a Turkish court dismissed the Istanbul provincial head of the opposition CHP over bribery allegations, citing irregularities in the congress that elected the branch's leadership. The administration was dissolved and replaced with interim members. The ruling is politically significant, as it may set a precedent for a Özal and his executive board over similar allegations tied to the party's 2023 convention.
- Türkiye's economy grew 4.8% year-on-year in Q2, beating forecasts of 3.87%, with GDP reaching 14.62 trillion lira (\$377.6 billion). Quarterly growth slowed slightly to 1.6% from 1.7% in Q1. Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek said Türkiye is sustaining growth while inflation continues to ease despite global challenges.

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