

In this edition of *Türkiye in Focus*;

- While the Turkish public was outraged by Israel's illegal seizure of aid flotillas in international waters bound for Gaza, Ankara's diplomacy remained focused on bringing a cessation of hostilities.
- Türkiye's intelligence agency continues its operations targeting the activities of Israel's Mossad inside Turkish territory.
- Debates surrounding the smaller opposition parties may be an early indication that their importance will grow in the upcoming period.

Türkiye's Strong Response to the Gaza Crisis and Renewed Mediation Efforts

Türkiye's national agenda remains dominated by Gaza, with recent Israeli assaults on the "Global Sumud" and "Freedom Flotilla" reigniting profound public anger. The illegal seizure of vessels and peaceful activists has not only sparked widespread protests but also vividly revived the traumatic memory of the 2009 Mavi Marmara attack, in which ten Turkish citizens were killed by the Israeli army in international waters. For many in Türkiye, the echoes of that event remain vivid - a reminder of both national grief and defiance in the face of injustice.

In the two years since Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza began, Türkiye has witnessed a significant wave of social mobilisation. Boycotts against Israeli-linked products and demonstrations across major cities have become a defining feature of the country's political and civic landscape.

Statements from activists returning from the flotilla highlight two particularly striking details: reports of mistreatment by Israeli forces and the presence of soldiers who spoke fluent Turkish while addressing Turkish detainees. This revelation underscores the complicated legacy of the Sephardic Jewish community in Türkiye. While the public has broadly avoided antisemitic sentiment, it is increasingly demanding that the state revoke the citizenship of dual nationals involved in or supporting atrocities in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Türkiye's diplomatic establishment has played an active and, at times, delicate role. Both the foreign minister



(Hakan Akgün - Anadolu Agency)

and the head of the National Intelligence Organisation (MİT) have been engaged in intense rounds of negotiation aimed at advancing a ceasefire framework in Gaza. Through coordination with other mediating nations, Türkiye helped facilitate an agreement between Israel and Hamas to initiate the first phase of a ceasefire. While far from a resolution, this development marks a rare moment of cautious optimism. It also reinforces Türkiye's broader ambition: to position itself as a moral and strategic actor capable of translating its deep historical connection to the Palestinian cause into tangible diplomatic outcomes on the global stage.

Türkiye Tightens the Net on Mossad's Local Operations

Turkish intelligence has once again struck at Israel's shadow network inside the country. In a joint operation by the National Intelligence Organisation (MİT) and the Istanbul Police Department, two individuals were detained on charges of selling information to Mossad. According to official sources, the suspects were operating under the guise of a private



(Anadolu Agency)

detective agency, collecting intelligence on Palestinian activists residing in Türkiye. The case sheds light on the extent of Mossad's covert activities in the region and its reliance on local collaborators to monitor pro-Palestinian figures — an issue that has increasingly drawn Ankara's attention amid rising regional tensions.

This is far from an isolated incident. Over the past three years, MİT has conducted six separate operations targeting Mossad-linked networks across Türkiye, resulting in the arrest of 51 individuals accused of spying for Israel. The steady pace of these counterintelligence efforts underscores how Türkiye and Israel's relationship — already strained by Israel's genocide in Gaza and aggressive stance in Syria — has extended into a simmering intelligence rivalry. As Ankara positions itself as a vocal defender of Palestinian rights and a regional power intent on curbing foreign espionage, these operations send a clear message: Türkiye is not only challenging Israel diplomatically but also confronting its shadowy networks within its borders.

Small Parties May Play Key Roles Ahead of Türkiye's New Legislative Term

Türkiye's political season opened with an unexpected controversy following last week's parliamentary reception. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was photographed with several opposition leaders, excluding the Republican People's Party (CHP), which boycotted both the session and the reception under Özgür Özel's direction. The photo-op quickly sparked debate across the opposition, with CHP-aligned media criticising the DEM, Future (Gelecek), and DEVA parties for attending. What began as a gesture of political courtesy has become a litmus test for opposition unity and the stability of alliances formed in recent election cycles.

In response to the backlash, Future Party leader Ahmet Davutoğlu defended the meeting with Erdoğan as a routine political interaction, arguing that dialogue should not be maligned. DEVA Party leader Ali Babacan, meanwhile, issued a strong rebuke to CHP-affiliated commentators, condemning what he described as insults and defamation directed at his party. Seeking to contain the fallout, CHP leader Özgür Özel personally reached out to the other opposition figures, emphasising the need to maintain communication channels despite media-driven tensions. President Erdoğan characterised the treatment of the opposition leaders by CHP-affiliated media as "mobbing and lynching," while signalling his government's intention to pursue broader cross-party agreements in the new legislative term.

The coming parliamentary year is expected to revolve around two major policy tracks: the completion of the "terror-free Türkiye" process and early discussions on a new constitution. While few expect a constitutional draft to materialise in 2026, momentum toward introducing the debate ahead of the 2028 elections appears strong. Despite their modest electoral performance, smaller parties like DEVA, Gelecek, DEM, and İYİ hold a meaningful number of seats in parliament—seats that



(TCCB / Murat Kula - Anadolu Agency)

could prove pivotal in key votes. DEVA and Gelecek bridge conservative voters, DEM Parti provides outreach to Kurdish constituencies, while İYİ Party offers a link to nationalist circles, each giving CHP valuable credibility with segments it has struggled to reach. However, a notable number of these parties' deputies, originally elected via CHP lists, have shifted allegiance to the ruling AK Party. Although not coming from CHP itself, these moves are perceived by many within the CHP base as a betrayal, highlighting the fragile nature of these cross-party partnerships. In this complex and fluid landscape, even small parties are poised to exert an outsized influence on Türkiye's political trajectory in the coming years.

Highlights

- President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, alongside the Turkish delegation, conducted high-level diplomatic meetings in Azerbaijan during the Organisation of Turkic States summits.
- It was announced that Pope Leo XIV will make his first foreign visit to Türkiye at the end of November. The Pope will visit İznik in Bursa province, Türkiye, where the Council of Nicaea was held, marking its 1,700th anniversary.
- Serdar Öktem, a politically connected lawyer and defendant in the Sinan Ateş case, was assassinated. Investigations into the circumstances and motives behind his homicide are ongoing.



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