

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*;

- As the war on Iran unfolds, Türkiye persists in its calls for dialogue.
- Researcher Kübra Aktaş has analysed the impact of the recent situation on potential human mobility.
- The potential involvement of Kurdish groups in Iran in the war is being closely monitored.

As Iran War Escalates, Türkiye Ramps Up Diplomacy



(TUR Presidency / Mustafa Kamaci - Anadolu Agency)

Since the US-Israel military campaign against Iran began, Türkiye has intensified diplomacy. Even before open hostilities, Ankara pushed to mediate, considering Istanbul as a negotiation site. Türkiye maintains its anti-war stance; President Erdoğan labelled the attacks a violation of Iranian sovereignty and offered condolences after the assassination of Ali Khamenei.

Türkiye's diplomacy remains nuanced, also criticising Iran's military actions against neighbours. The interception of an Iranian missile by NATO near Turkish airspace tested this posture. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan immediately raised concerns with his Iranian counterpart, after which Tehran assured Türkiye was not the missile's target.

Throughout, the Turkish Presidency and Foreign Ministry have actively communicated multilaterally, mainly with the US, Europe, and Gulf states. Ankara's main aim: to de-escalate tensions and promote regional stability to prevent wider conflict.

Ankara-Brussels Diplomatic Track: What Does "Close Coordination" Signal in the Iran Crisis?

Researcher Kübra Aktaş has analysed the respective approaches of Türkiye and the EU regarding potential human mobility in the aftermath of the situation in Iran.

The US-Israel campaign against Iran has triggered a familiar policy reflex in Europe and Türkiye: act early to manage shocks before they become long-term crises. This was seen in the March 1 call between President Erdoğan and European Commission President von der Leyen, as both prioritised diplomacy and "close coordination" amid fears of new mobility pressures.

Two points are key to understanding this diplomatic traffic. First, referring to "preparedness" does not mean mass displacement is underway; rather, it involves standard crisis management such as scenario planning and early coordination while timelines allow. Second, Europe's focus on migration is driven by the increased risk of spillover from the conflict: as hostilities come closer to EU-linked assets or territories, migration becomes prioritised earlier and treated as a strategic concern to be addressed proactively, rather than as a distant after-thought.

Von der Leyen's public remarks are telling. On March 2 in Brussels, she said diplomacy and de-escalation are the "only lasting solution." She warned that Europe must prepare for fallout across areas such as energy, transport, security, and migration. This approach—first work for de-escalation, then prepare—shows Brussels sees the Iran issue as a multi-domain risk, not just a single war zone.

However, migration in this crisis is not expected to follow a simple, direct pattern. There is little evidence for an immediate, large influx of migrants into Europe as a direct result of the crisis. More likely, if displacement occurs, it would unfold in phases. Initially, people would probably move short distances within the region to escape immediate threats, economic disruptions, or loss of essential services. Further movement to Europe would depend on how long instability persists and whether livelihoods and governance in neighbouring



(Dursun Aydemir - Anadolu Agency)

countries deteriorate. Iran's demographics influence these dynamics. Historically, Iran has hosted a significant Afghan population. In an escalation, the most vulnerable, such as those affected by shrinking job opportunities, stricter policing, or weakened social support, would likely be first to move.

This makes Türkiye central to EU planning. During the Erdoğan-von der Leyen call, Ankara emphasised the importance of diplomacy and close EU coordination. For Türkiye, controlling migration means regulated borders: balancing humanitarian standards with limits on security and capacity pressures.

For the EU, the same logic holds due to institutional path dependency. Existing cooperation frameworks are easier to adapt under pressure than to rebuild, especially when ongoing joint work on nearby crises, such as Syria, is underway. Early cooperation with Ankara stems from structural interdependence shaped by geography and past crises.

The real question is not if migration will happen, but if it can be managed without causing panic or policy overreach. Preparedness is not alarmism if it is based on evidence, sequencing, and protection standards.

Potential Moves of Kurdish Groups in Iran Closely Monitored

Continued US and Israeli attacks on Iran have raised speculation about the possible role of Kurdish militants inside Iran. Before recent escalations, reports suggested some groups had formed a coalition to destabilise Iran. Reports of direct talks between President Trump and regional figures, including Bafel Talabani and Masoud Barzani, also emerged. However, claims of Kurdish armed operations against Iran were quickly dismissed. Such strategies by these groups have yet to materialise.



(Yunus Keleş - Anadolu Agency)

Despite speculation, these factions' real ability to challenge Tehran remains unproven. Türkiye's political scene is a key indicator of regional stability. The pro-Kurdish DEM Party stated: "We defend the view that regime change in Iran should come from the people's will—not external designs." This reflects wider opinion in Türkiye: most oppose US and Israeli military action, seeing it as the main threat to regional peace.

Analysts say the Kurdish population in Türkiye—the region's largest—cannot be ignored in this complex picture. The experience of the YPG in northern Syria, where reliance on external support often failed, serves as a reminder of the limits of foreign-backed movements.

Going forward, two key factors should guide any analysis. First, Ankara continues efforts to create a more inclusive future with the Kurdish population, both inside Türkiye and in the region. Second, the Turkish public, including Kurdish constituencies, mostly oppose foreign-led military attacks and any kind of external occupation. As the region faces instability, domestic efforts for social and political stability—not military alliances—will likely drive the future.

Highlights

- Türkiye's Director of Communications Burhanettin Duran and AK Party Spokesperson Ömer Çelik condemned Israel's detention of Turkish journalists.
- The Mayor of Bolu and his deputy have been remanded in custody as part of an investigation into allegations of graft.
- To mitigate the impact of rising oil prices on inflation, a new measure has been officially implemented that allows a significant portion of the cost burden to be tax-deductible.

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