

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*;

- The second Iranian missile entering Turkish airspace prompted a response from Ankara, yet the country continues to emphasise its commitment to regional peace.
- The trial of imprisoned Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu has begun, with prosecutors alleging that he established a criminal organisation for financial gain.
- Türkiye has responded to increased regional tensions by deploying six F-16 fighter jets to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, signalling a strategic military adjustment.

Second Iranian Missile Intercepted Within Turkish Airspace



(Turkish Presidency/Mustafa Kamaci - Anadolu Agency)

Amid heightened regional tensions, the ongoing war initiated by Israel and the United States against Iran is being monitored closely in Türkiye, remaining a key topic in both international and domestic discourse. This week, for the second time, an Iranian missile was intercepted over Turkish airspace by NATO defence systems, prompting Ankara to summon the Iranian Ambassador to formally protest. This was followed by a call

between President Erdoğan and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. While Iran maintained it had not fired the missiles, the ongoing communication ensures contact remains intact despite the conflict's complexities.

Ankara continues to prioritise regional stability and peace, repeatedly urging de-escalation to prevent the war from spreading. President Erdoğan's recent parliamentary address—"We do not have a religion called Sunnism or Shiism; our only religion is Islam"—was widely seen as a strategic effort to transcend sectarian divides and promote shared regional coexistence.

Türkiye's diplomatic positioning aims to prevent rising violence among neighbours. After a cabinet meeting, President Erdoğan welcomed remarks from Kurdish authorities in Iraq on their continued non-involvement in the Iran conflict. He stressed the importance of avoiding "fratricidal strife," highlighting Türkiye's policy of preventing regional actors from being pitted against each other. This approach reflects a nuanced policy aimed at safeguarding national interests and maintaining harmony among neighbours.

The İmamoğlu Case Has Started

Turkish politics is currently dominated by the "İmamoğlu Organised Crime Group" case centred on Istanbul's imprisoned mayor, Ekrem İmamoğlu. The core of the indictment rests on allegations that a structure, purportedly established under İmamoğlu's leadership and described as spreading "like the arms of an octopus," secured financial resources through methods such as bid rigging and bribery. It is further claimed that this financial power was part of a broader strategy to take over the Republican People's Party (CHP) by funding certain journalists and shifting intra-party dynamics, ultimately aiming to secure a presidential candidacy. With a total of 407 defendants, 107 of whom are currently in custody, this massive trial represents a critical juncture where law and politics are deeply intertwined.

The course of the case has created a heated debate across three main axes: the speed of the trial, public transparency, and political implications. The court's decision to hold continuous hearings for 45 days (excluding Fridays and holidays) is seen as a response to public expectations for a "swift trial." However, given the sheer scale of the case and the number of defendants, it is likely that this issue will occupy the national agenda for a significant period. Meanwhile, proposals from both the CHP and the MHP to broadcast the trial live on television have hit a legal wall, as current legislation does



(Evrin Aydın - Anadolu Agency)

not permit it. This demand highlights concerns over the trial being used as political fodder and tests the delicate balance between public transparency and judicial independence. On the other hand, the fact that the trials are normally held open to the press ensures transparency.

From a strategic standpoint, the fact that the main opposition party appears to have locked all its energy and focus onto this case has become a major point of criticism and risk. Critics argue that by tethering its entire political future to the outcome of this trial amid pressing national and regional developments, the CHP is limiting its ability to develop proactive policies.

Six Turkish F-16s Deployed to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

Recent drone strikes allegedly from Iran have spurred rapid militarisation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Greece's decision to deploy F-16s at Paphos Airport, controlled by the Greek Cypriot Administration, is viewed by analysts as an effort to expand its military presence. This altered the status quo, prompting Türkiye to deploy six F-16s to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), noting that the deployment comes "in light of recent developments in our region," with additional measures to be taken if deemed necessary. The announcement emphasised bolstering the security of the Turkish Cypriot community amid escalating regional tensions.

This sequence of events underscores how local territorial disputes are increasingly becoming intertwined with broader Middle Eastern conflicts. Beyond the immediate tactical deployments, these manoeuvres reflect a deepening geopolitical rift involving Greece, the Greek Cypriot Administration, and Israel. This trilateral alignment is increasingly viewed by Turkish strategic circles as a concerted



(İsmail Aslandağ - Anadolu Agency)

effort to marginalise Türkiye's interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly regarding maritime jurisdiction and energy resources. The synchronisation of Greek military buildup with Israeli regional interests suggests a shift in the balance of power that transcends the traditional Cyprus issue.

Highlights

- NATO Patriots have been deployed in Malatya amid rising regional tensions.
- Turkish lender Halkbank and US Department of Justice initiate deferred prosecution agreement as of Wednesday.
- Eight Muslim-majority countries, including Türkiye, issued a joint statement condemning Israel's restrictions on Al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan.

No Edition for the Next Week

Please be informed that there won't be an edition of *Türkiye in Focus* for the next week as we take a short break. We'll be back afterward with fresh perspectives and updates on the latest developments in Türkiye. Thank you for your continued support and understanding

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