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## “Everyone must shoulder responsibility to ensure peace in the Middle East”

Following the NATO Heads of State and Government Summit, President Erdoğan commented on the ceasefire between Iran and Israel during a press conference, saying: “We hope that the de facto ceasefire will be transformed into a lasting calm as soon as possible. We believe that, including our allies, everyone must shoulder responsibility to ensure peace in the Middle East.”

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan held a press conference following the NATO Heads of State and Government Summit, which took place in The Hague, Netherlands.

Stating that the summit had concluded, President Erdoğan thanked King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands, Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof, and the Dutch authorities for their hospitality and hosting.

He congratulated NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte for his successful leadership and said: “As is closely followed by the public, the key outcome of our summit in The Hague was the decision by allies to increase their defense spending. During the council session, we decided to raise our defense expenditures to 5 percent of our Gross Domestic Products over the next ten years.”

### “WE STRIVE TO KEEP OUR COUNTRY AWAY FROM ALL CRISES, HOT CONFLICTS, AND TENSIONS”

Stating that this decision is a necessity for NATO amid a climate in which existing crises are deepening and new ones are emerging every day, President Erdoğan continued: “We are an ally that has suffered the most from the threat of terrorism and is directly affected by many of the crises in our region. Almost all of the events currently dominating the international agenda are unfolding near Turkey. We strive to keep our country away from all these crises, hot conflicts, and tensions.

We attach great importance to strengthening our deterrence and enhancing our defense. The significant progress made by the Turkish defense industry in recent years is being recognized globally. In many areas, especially in the field of armed and unarmed unmanned aerial vehicles, we are among the global leaders. Our current defense expenditures already exceed the 2 percent target set at previous summits. In fact, in terms of our existing infrastructure, defense industry investments, resources allocated to innovation, and international efforts, we are among the countries closest to reaching the 5 percent level. I believe it is appropriate for many allies

to assume greater responsibility in the face of threats and challenges and align with our stance. Of course, merely increasing defense spending will not be sufficient to enhance the effectiveness of the alliance. It is also essential to sincerely establish mutual understanding and cooperation among allies.”

President Erdoğan said, “In this regard, we took the lead in reflecting in the alliance documents the understanding that barriers to trade in defense industry products among allies must be removed unconditionally—without ‘ifs or buts.’ We hope to see this fully implemented in all its aspects.”

Highlighting that the European Union’s defense and security initiatives should be complementary to NATO, President Erdoğan stated:

“I emphasized that the full inclusion of non-EU NATO allies in the Union’s defense industry initiatives would serve the interests of all of Europe. Ultimately, enhanced defense capabilities in Europe are in the interest of the entire Euro-Atlantic region. Our hope is that this inclusive approach becomes dominant across the continent.”

President Erdoğan underlined that NATO Secretary General Rutte’s approach—centered on the development of the defense industry from Texas to Ankara—is extremely valuable in this regard.

### “OUR GOAL IS TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A PROCESS LEADING TO LASTING PEACE”

President Erdoğan emphasized that Türkiye is among the leading allies highlighting NATO’s role in the fight against terrorism, stating:

“Indeed, terrorism has been recorded as one of the two main current threats facing NATO. In The Hague, I stressed once again that combating terrorism can only be successful through the sincere solidarity of allies. We ensured that this threat was reflected in the summit declaration.

The war in Ukraine, now ongoing for over three years, has had both regional and global consequences. Casualties and destruction continue to increase on both sides. As Türkiye, we are intensifying our efforts to bring this war to an end through a just and sustainable peace. Back in March 2022, we hosted talks in Istanbul, which, although left incomplete, yielded tangible results such

as the Black Sea grain initiative and prisoner exchanges.

Our belief in diplomacy, combined with the trust placed in us by the parties, enabled us to resume our mediation efforts in Istanbul. In the negotiations we hosted, significant progress was made regarding additional prisoner and body exchanges. Open dialogue also took place regarding a potential ceasefire. I believe a window of opportunity has been opened for a ceasefire and permanent peace. This must not be squandered. Our aim is to support the parties in taking further concrete steps and thereby lay the foundations for a process that leads to lasting peace. With the support of our allies, I continue to hope that the war will come to an end as soon as possible. As I always say: there are no losers in a just peace.”

President Erdoğan noted that the threats and crises in the Middle East are becoming increasingly severe with each passing day.

He drew attention to the nearly two-year-long oppression faced by the Palestinian people in Gaza, reminding that more than 56,000 Gazans—most of them women and children—have been killed so far in Israeli attacks, and another 129,000 have been injured, again mostly women and children.

### “THE HUMANITARIAN TRAGEDY IN GAZA HAS TURNED INTO A HUMANITARIAN CATASTROPHE”

Erdoğan pointed out that 80 percent of Gaza has been destroyed and that 95 percent of its healthcare infrastructure has been damaged. Churches, mosques, schools, and hospitals have been bombed.

Stating that over 2 million Gazans are

struggling to survive under extremely difficult conditions amidst the rubble and constant bombing, Erdoğan said: “The Israeli government is blocking even the most basic necessities from entering Gaza. Due to Israel’s obstructions and attacks, the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza has turned into a full-blown humanitarian catastrophe. No person with a conscience can remain silent in the face of such brutality. You may stay quiet when babies are sleeping, but not when babies are being killed. I call on everyone who values human life to raise their voice against this oppression. However, we observe that the international community, particularly relevant institutions, has been ineffective in stopping Israel. Israel, which disregards all rules and openly violates international law, continues to add new violations every day.

It must be clearly understood that Israel cannot ensure the security of its people by destabilizing the region. Just like all other countries in the region, Israel’s security depends on the stability, peace, and prosperity of its neighbors.

What we are witnessing once again reminds us that a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders and with geographical integrity is inevitable.” President Erdoğan underlined that their goal is to establish a climate of peace where all peoples and all faiths live side by side in harmony:

“We have been living on these lands together for a thousand years. God willing, we will continue to live there forever. Therefore, for the well-being of the entire region, we will continue to speak the truth—no matter how bitter or uncomfortable it may be.”



“A LASTING SOLUTION WITH IRAN IS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH DIPLOMACY AND NEGOTIATION”

President Erdoğan noted, “The latest military escalation between our neighbor Iran and Israel has put our region at serious risk. From the very beginning of the crisis, we engaged in intensive diplomatic efforts, including phone calls with regional leaders.” He reminded that the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member states gathered in Istanbul and shared critical messages about the rising tensions. Erdoğan continued:

“I believe it’s worth reiterating what I’ve stated previously: a lasting resolution of issues with our neighbor Iran is only possible through diplomacy and negotiation. Our region is filled with examples proving that war, destruction, aggression, and threats lead nowhere. We welcome the ceasefire that was achieved with the efforts of U.S. President Mr. Trump. We expect the parties to adhere unconditionally to our dear friend Trump’s call. We hope that the de facto ceasefire will be transformed into a lasting calm as soon as possible. We believe that, including our allies, everyone must shoulder responsibility to ensure peace in the Middle East. We will continue to fulfill our part in this regard.” President Erdoğan stated that he held meetings with many leaders during the summit, including U.S. President Donald Trump, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron, Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof, and Romanian President Nicușor Dan, among others.



He explained that in these contacts, they discussed ways to improve bilateral relations with allies as well as the topics on the summit agenda. President Erdoğan expressed his satisfaction that Turkey’s proposal to host next year’s NATO Summit had been finalized, saying he was pleased to welcome the allies in Turkey next year.

“WE WILL CONTINUE TO STAND AGAINST OPPRESSION”

Following his speech, President Erdoğan answered questions from members of the press. In response to a question about “the withdrawal of the Russian army from Azerbaijan,” President Erdoğan said:



“The Russian army has now left Azerbaijan, they are no longer there. Since they have withdrawn, this issue is no longer valid. I recently visited Karabakh, and there is no such thing there. Currently, Azerbaijan is making efforts to bring the region under the livable rule of the Azerbaijani state. They are taking steps regarding both infrastructure and superstructure and are making significant investments.” When asked, “If a conflict breaks out between Turkey and Israel, would NATO come to Turkey’s defense?” President Erdoğan responded: “As long as there is no attack against Turkey, and given that currently there is no such situation, Turkey is a country of peace in its region and continues all its efforts to ensure peace prevails in the region.

However, besides all this, we will continue to stand against Israel’s unbearable, intolerable attitude. Just as we have stood against oppressors in Gaza and the region until today, we continue to stand and will keep doing so. We especially continue to stand with the poor and the oppressed.

Think about it — for months, in Gaza, no humanitarian aid has reached the oppressed people there. What will happen to these people if no aid gets through? We are telling powerful countries: stand against Israel. What must be done to ensure that the gates to Gaza are opened for humanitarian aid? They must be opened. Even the Red Cross is not being allowed access by Israel. Aid is not reaching the people of Gaza even through the Red Cross. This is the current situation. If the Red Cross could operate, it would allow the delivery of all humanitarian aid, food, medicine, clothing, and other essentials. But unfortunately, even this is not possible at the moment.” Regarding the question, “What path will Turkey follow to increase its share of GDP allocated to defense from 2% to 5%? Did the Eurofighter issue come up in your meeting with Germany?” President Erdoğan replied: “As of now, within the next 10 years, the steps we

will take will naturally come from the national budget. By gradually allocating the necessary share from the national budget, we will provide this support to NATO.

On the Eurofighter issue, we have had and are continuing discussions with both the United Kingdom and Germany, and there are positive developments on this front. Once these positive developments are fully realized, we will take our steps accordingly.” When asked, “In which city will next year’s NATO Summit in Turkey be held?” President Erdoğan said that the previous one was held in Istanbul, and they would make a decision after consultations and finalize it within the coming week. Emphasizing that there is no time to lose, President Erdoğan said: “We will notify the NATO Secretary General of our decision after the meeting we will hold on this summit, which will be different from the one we previously held in Istanbul.”

“PROTECTING MY COUNTRY’S UNITY IS MY DUTY”

Answering the question, “Last month, Russia sent a low-level diplomatic delegation to the final round of talks with Ukraine. How does this affect you? What are your expectations for defense cooperation with the European Union?” President Erdoğan said: “Representatives with appropriate authority were sent,

and the talks between Russia and Ukraine were successfully conducted with these representatives. These negotiations were led and maintained by my Foreign Minister, Mr. Hakan, and the outcome was quite good and successful.”

When asked about Spain committing to a 2% contribution instead of 5% for defense spending at the NATO Summit and the stance of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, President Erdoğan replied: “Since the time frame is 10 years, I don’t see a problem here. Achieving such a ratio within 10 years is feasible. Of course, NATO needs such strength, and the only way to ensure it is for NATO member states within the European Union to handle this issue. NATO member states currently have the capacity and strength to do so. As Turkey, we made a positive statement on this matter, saying it would be beneficial to provide this contribution within 10 years.”

In response to the question about what steps would be taken if the PKK lays down its arms and disbands, and what message would be given to the Kurds living in the region, President Erdoğan stated: “I have no issues with my Kurdish citizens living in the region as their President. Things are going very well right now. They have a strong presence in Parliament.

Since they have no such problem, this journey, this progress... They requested a meeting, and I received Ms. Pervin together with the late Sırrı Süreyya. We met with them at the Presidency together with my colleagues. I believe they have requested another meeting, and we will hold that meeting soon and continue our discussions with them. There is no problem at all. In my country, with Turks, Kurds, Laz people, Circassians, Arabs — we are all one, and it is my duty to protect the unity of my country. We will continue to do this in the best possible way.”



# Foreign Minister Fidan: We Will Continue to Stand Firm Against Oppression

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan stated, “As Turkey, during our term presidency, we will raise the voice of the Islamic world, prioritize the establishment of global justice, and continue to stand firm against oppression.”

Minister Fidan addressed the participants at the opening of the 51st Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held at the Istanbul Lütfi Kırdar International Convention and Exhibition Center.

Fidan noted that Istanbul is one of the key centers for regional and global peace efforts. He thanked Cameroon for fulfilling its OIC term presidency duties successfully throughout 2024.

Fidan stated that the strong voice rising from Africa is a sign of a multi-centered revival within the Islamic world. “The voice of Africa is our voice. We believe our organization plays an important role in helping Africa achieve its rightful place on the global stage,” he said.

He emphasized, “As Turkey, during our term presidency, we will raise the voice of the Islamic geography, prioritize the establishment of global justice, and continue to stand tall in the face of oppression.”

“Israel, which continues its genocide in Gaza and spills blood across all occupied territories, is now attacking our neighbor Iran, dragging the entire region to the brink of a catastrophe,” Fidan said, adding that consultations would primarily focus on presenting a strong stance against this “borderless aggression.”

Fidan underlined the need for regional ownership to address all the challenges within the OIC geography.



## “This is clearly an Israel problem”

Minister Fidan stressed that Israel’s ongoing aggression and occupation policies reveal, “in all its stark reality,” the existence of a fundamental problem that needs to be addressed:

“This issue is not a problem of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, or Iran. This is clearly an Israel problem.”

Referring to Israel’s attack on Iran during a time when negotiations on Iran’s nuclear program are ongoing, Minister Fidan stated that these attacks were “strongly condemned.”

He warned that this situation could result in “catastrophic” consequences for the

region and could also have wide-reaching repercussions elsewhere, emphasizing, “These illegal attacks must be stopped immediately.”

## “Islamic countries must lead the construction of a global system that prioritizes justice”

Fidan said that Istanbul, which has carried the dignity and memory of Islamic civilization throughout history, remains a meeting point where hopes for a common future are nurtured.

“Today, we are holding this meeting right in the middle of a crisis belt stretching from Gaza to Iran, from Lebanon to Yemen,” he said.

He emphasized that the participation of many countries representing the Islamic world, despite difficult times, serves as a beautiful example of solidarity:

“Let us not forget: divided nations fall into weakness, and hearts that are split will not see victory. We see the ummah as a whole.”

Fidan noted that multilateralism — the foundation of international cooperation — is now facing a legitimacy crisis, with growing intolerance, identity-based polarization, and the erosion of international law deepening global instability.

He highlighted the ineffectiveness of international mechanisms, especially the UN Security Council, which has been fully exposed by the ongoing atrocities in Gaza:

“Our organization must play a leading role in this regard. As part of a bloc representing one-quarter of the world’s population and possessing immense resources, Islamic countries must lead the construction of a global system that upholds justice and prioritizes rights.”

Fidan stated that the strong participation in the meeting reflects a shared commitment and determination to act in unity and solidarity:

“In this turbulent period we are going through, Islam provides the essential guidance we all urgently need,” he said.

Fidan added that the Organization serves not only as a dialogue platform but also plays an important role in coordinating the policies of member states and fostering consensus.

He emphasized that Turkey, as a founding member of the OIC, will continue to play a constructive and leading role in realizing the Organization’s full potential. He concluded by noting that efforts will be concentrated in four main areas.

Minister Fidan stated that necessary steps

would be taken to develop the Organization’s relations with other countries and international organizations, and that the rights of Muslim communities and minorities would continue to be defended with determination.

## “As Turkey, we are ready to do our part”

Referring to Israel’s attacks on Gaza, Fidan said, “The first priority of the international community should be to prevent the current situation from turning into a spiral of violence that would further endanger regional and global security.”

Fidan said, “As Turkey, we are ready to do our part,” emphasizing that all diplomatic steps to be taken under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan are supported and that diplomatic traffic is ongoing.

Fidan stated, “We believe that OIC members should act in unity against Israel’s actions and demonstrate real solidarity with Iran,” and added:

“Israel continues its genocide policies and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian people. Not only Gaza, but also the West Bank is being turned into a war zone. Israel’s aim is to drive Palestinians from their homes and end the vision of a two-state solution.

Our priority is a permanent ceasefire, the release of hostages and detainees, and uninterrupted humanitarian access to Gaza. We strongly support the ongoing negotiations for this purpose.

## Once again, I thank Qatar and Egypt for their efforts in this matter.

It is clear that the two-state solution is the only viable path to a just and lasting peace.

It has now become much clearer that the ongoing occupation in Palestinian territories is the root cause of all conflicts in our region.

The Palestinian cause and the protection of Jerusalem are the reason for the existence of the OIC.”

## “We are very pleased that Syria has returned to our Organization”

Minister Fidan reminded that thanks to joint efforts, it is possible to take necessary steps toward a stable and prosperous Syria for the Syrian people, and said, “We are very pleased that Syria has returned to our Organization.”

He stated that as the process of easing ongoing sanctions on Syria continues, support for the Syrian people must also continue. He said the Balkans, a long-

standing part of the Islamic geography, bear deep traces not only of historical ties but also of shared civilization and brotherhood.

Fidan said, “Our Muslim brothers living in these lands have gone through many trials in the past,” emphasizing that today they are also standing strong against the danger of fragmentation.

He said, “It is our common duty to show that they are not alone and that the Islamic world stands by our Bosnian brothers,” and strongly condemned the discriminatory, separatist, and hate-based rhetoric in the region, as well as religious and ethnic revisionist approaches.

## Support for peace in Sudan

Speaking about developments in Sudan, Fidan said, “Our hearts ache. As Turkey, we strongly support all regional and international peace efforts to end this crisis.”

Calling on the international community to sincerely support peace and stability in Sudan, Fidan said, “Let us not forget that solving this issue is of vital importance not only for the people of Sudan but also for the entire continent, especially the Horn of Africa.”

Conflict between Pakistan and India Referring to the conflict between Pakistan and India, Fidan said, “It once again revealed the fragility of peace and stability in South Asia.”

Fidan stated that he welcomed the ceasefire decision between the parties and expressed hope that this opportunity would be used to resolve the issue through dialogue.

Minister Fidan said, “Unless the disputes in the region, especially the Kashmir issue, are resolved, the potential for tension will remain. Channels of dialogue need to be made operational.”

## Call for support for the natural rights of Turkish Cypriots

Reminding that there are two peoples and two states on the island of Cyprus, Fidan said:

“The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, an inseparable part of the Islamic world, is represented in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as an observer. However, unfortunately, Turkish Cypriots have continued to live under unjust and inhumane isolation imposed on them for decades. We call on all member states to support the natural rights of Turkish Cypriots and to engage with them directly.”

# An international conference on cybersecurity was held in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan, which holds the rotating presidency of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), hosted an international conference on cybersecurity among member states.

More than 150 delegates, including representatives from law enforcement agencies, public institutions, IT, and corporate structures operating in the field of cybersecurity, attended the conference held in a hotel conference hall in the city of Cholpon-Ata in the Issyk-Kul Region.

Three themed panels at the conference addressed the following topics: combating cybercrime, cyberterrorism, and cyber espionage; developing mechanisms for operational information exchange and coordination among countries; and protecting critical information infrastructure in the public and corporate sectors. Participants included the Security



Council Secretaries of CSTO member states—Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, and Tajikistan—as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Secretariat, senior officials of relevant institutions from CSTO member states, and experts attending the cyber training held within the scope of the conference.

Cyberattacks raise concerns  
Kamchybek Tashiev, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Chairman of the State Committee for National Security of Kyrgyzstan, stated that this conference provided a unique platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, and solutions that could lay the groundwork for strengthening cybersecurity at both national and international levels. “We hope the conference will allow us to develop practical steps to improve the security of our information systems,” he said. “Cyber threats are becoming increasingly complex and have more destructive consequences,” said Tashiev. He outlined the measures taken against cybercrimes in the public

sector, noting that the Cybersecurity Law was adopted in Kyrgyzstan in 2024, and that a digital forensic laboratory and a cybersecurity operations center had been established. Tashiev shared that five million cyberattacks had been recorded in the country since last year, 70% of which had been detected and neutralized, while the remaining 30% were of low criticality.

Azamat Osmonov, Head of the Department for Oversight of Presidential and Cabinet of Ministers’ Decisions under the Presidential Administration, emphasized that cybersecurity is no longer solely a domestic issue and proposed recommendations for joint efforts. Kyrgyzstan’s Security Council Secretary Baktybek Bekbolotov pointed out that cyberattacks pose a threat to national security, stating, “This situation is particularly important for CSTO member countries and their partners, as differing interests intersect within our area of responsibility.”

Cyberspace has become a new domain after land, sea, air, and space  
CSTO Secretary-General Imangali Tasmagambetov emphasized that there are no state borders in cyberspace and said, “Cyberspace has essentially become the fifth domain where various political and military forces confront each other, following land, sea, air, and space.”

Tasmagambetov underlined that countries resisting the development of a legal framework for relations in cyberspace are themselves contributing to the emergence of cyber threats.

He noted that a kind of “arms race” is underway in the field of cyber technologies and pointed out that the absence of a deterrence mechanism in cyberspace leads to the potential emergence of “cyber dictatorships.” Belarus Security Council State Secretary Aleksandr Volfovich stated that cyber attackers target any system they can access, regardless of whether it belongs to an individual, private, or public institution, and emphasized the need for new knowledge, experience, and innovation.

Kazakhstan’s Security Council Secretary Gizat Nurdauletov said, “Traditional border protection has lost its relevance. Crime has gone online, and people have become part of digital platforms. In this context, Kazakhstan is gradually moving toward a ‘zero trust’ approach. Modern problems require systematic coordination and accountability.” Deputy State Secretary of Belarus’s Security Council Aleksandr Neverovskiy shared that 88.3 million cyberattacks were recorded in Belarus during the January–June period of 2025.

Deputy Secretary of the Russian Security Council Aleksey Shevtsov reported that 208,000 cyberattacks were recorded in the Russian Federation in 2024.



# 3rd Meeting of the Presidents of the Council of Judges of the Organization of Turkic States Held in Baku



The 3rd Meeting of the Presidents of the Council of Judges of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) was held in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

The meeting, hosted by the Judicial and Legal Council of Azerbaijan and President of the Supreme Court Inam Karimov, was attended by Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council of Uzbekistan Halmumin Yodgorov, Chairwoman of the Council of Judges of Kyrgyzstan Aida Seidakmatova, and Member of the Supreme Judicial Council of Kazakhstan Yernar Begaliyev. Also present at the meeting were Secretary General of the OTS, Ambassador Kubanychbek Omuraliev, Vice President of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK) Fuzuli Aydoğdu, and President of the Supreme Court of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Bertan Özerdağ. During the meeting, the Statute of the OTS Council of Judges Network was adopted and signed by the participants.

**"The greatest goal of the OTS Council of Judges Network is to make the justice vision of the Turkic world visible on a global scale."**  
In his speech, HSK Vice President Aydoğdu stated that the network to be established would go beyond being just a coordination structure and would create a new synergy in many areas, from judicial ethics to professional development, the sharing of best practices, and mutual exchange of experiences. Aydoğdu said that they aim for this network to be a continuous communication and consultation platform among the relevant institutional bodies of OTS member states. He added: "It is our



primary goal that the OTS Council of Judges Network provides an effective mechanism for developing joint solutions to common problems, strengthens universal principles such as judicial independence, impartiality, and transparency, and makes the justice vision of the Turkic world visible on a global scale." President of the Judicial and Legal Council and the Supreme Court of Azerbaijan, Karimov, stated that the OTS Council of Judges Network is an important step towards institutionalizing concrete legal cooperation between member states. Karimov said, "With the adopted statute, a legal basis will be laid for multilateral and sustainable cooperation in the field of judiciary and law among the member states. In this context, a reliable platform will be established for implementing joint projects, organizing scientific and educational programs, training judges in ethics and professionalism, conducting joint legal research, and continuous exchange of experiences. This process will make significant contributions to deepening the common legal culture of the Turkic states and promoting the principles of justice and the rule of law more broadly."

# Kyrgyz Cultural Festival Held in Yozgat

The 2nd Kyrgyz Cultural Festival was held in the Yenifakılı district of Yozgat. At the festival grounds, traditional Kyrgyz dishes, local products, and national costumes were showcased. In addition, traditional games such as folk dances, aşık atma (bone throwing), and archery were performed.

Organized for the second time this year by the Kyrgyz living in Yenifakılı, the festival featured vibrant and enthusiastic activities. Participants had the opportunity to closely experience and discover the richness of Kyrgyz culture. Traditional foods, local goods, and national attire specific to the Kyrgyz were presented in the festival area. The event was attended by Yozgat Governor Mehmet Ali Özkan, Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Ruslan Kazakbaev, AK Party Deputy Chairman and Head of Relations with Turkic States Prof. Dr. Kürşad Zorlu, and Member of Parliament Süleyman Şahan.



**"Turkey Continues to Integrate with Its Brothers and Kin"**  
Kürşad Zorlu emphasized that Kyrgyzstan is an inseparable part of the Turkic World and one of the most strategically important points in the Central Asian region: "Kyrgyzstan is essentially a transition hub. It is also located at a very critical point of the Middle Corridor, which Turkey is rapidly working to bring into action. Strengthening Turkey-Kyrgyzstan relations and developing cooperation in every field will undoubtedly have a positive impact not only on the relations between the two countries but also on cooperation across the entire Turkic World."

Zorlu noted that relations between the two countries have progressed rapidly in recent years. He added that through the Manas University, newly established hospitals, the Maarif School, and various other initiatives, Turkey continues to integrate with its Kyrgyz brothers and kin in Kyrgyzstan.

**"We Must Be United"**  
Referring to a quote by Kyrgyz writer Cengiz Aytmatov, "Man is both the creator and the prisoner of history," Zorlu emphasized unity within the Turkic World: "We must be united. We want to bring this unity to life through concrete projects. We all share this vision. The vision of our

President for the Century of the Turkic World will, hopefully, continue to be crowned and materialized in every field." Zorlu participated in the Kyrgyz traditional game aşık atma, shot arrows with a bow, and visited Kyrgyz yurts.

**The Kyrgyz Migrated from the Pamir Plateau 43 Years Ago**  
Around 50 Kyrgyz families who migrated from the Pamir Plateau in Afghanistan 43 years ago and settled in the village of Ulupamir in Erciş, Van, have now embarked on a new life in the Yenifakılı district of Yozgat to contribute to regional tourism. The Kyrgyz community, settled in housing built by the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ), continues to preserve their traditions and customs. The second edition of the "Kyrgyz Festival" offered colorful and lively scenes. In the festival area, traditional Kyrgyz crafts and skills—such as tailoring, saddle making, leather shoe crafting, and carpet weaving—were displayed, along with presentations about Kyrgyz culture, traditions, and cuisine.



# 2nd China-Central Asia Summit Held in Kazakhstan



Leaders of Central Asia and China gathered at the 2nd China-Central Asia Summit held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

The summit, hosted by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Palace of Independence in Astana, was attended by President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, and President of China Xi Jinping. In his opening speech, President Tokayev emphasized that Central Asia, with a total population exceeding 80 million and its rich natural resources, is increasingly strengthening its position as a significant actor in international relations. He highlighted the crucial role of comprehensive cooperation with China in this process and said, “I am pleased to note that relations between Central Asia and China have reached the level of an eternal and comprehensive strategic partnership.” Noting that the total gross domestic product of Central Asian countries is approaching half a trillion dollars and that mutual trade volume within the region is increasing, Tokayev also stated that last year the total trade volume between Central Asian countries and China reached a record high of 95 billion dollars. Tokayev remarked that Kazakhstan continues to be China's largest trading partner in the region, with bilateral trade volume reaching 44 billion dollars. He stated that Central Asia has become a key logistics hub connecting Asia and Europe, saying, “In 2024, the total volume of cargo transported from China through Central Asian countries increased by 12%, exceeding 211,000 containers.”

Tokayev pointed out that 85% of land transportation from China to Europe currently passes through Kazakhstan and suggested that building a joint cargo terminal with China at the Kurik Port on the Caspian Sea coast should be considered. He also noted that Central Asia hosts 20% of the world's uranium reserves, over 17% of oil, 7% of natural gas, and significant quantities of rare earth elements. Tokayev emphasized the importance of cooperation with China in modernizing energy infrastructure in these areas. Tokayev expressed Kazakhstan's interest in benefiting from China's experience in nuclear energy and stated that they are ready to sign an agreement in this field in the near future. President Tokayev underlined that the summit reaffirmed the countries' shared interest in strengthening good neighborly relations, mutually beneficial cooperation, and sustainable development. At the summit, the five Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan—along with China signed the Treaty of Eternal Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation. In addition, the Astana Declaration, the final communiqué of the 2nd China-Central Asia Summit, was also adopted during the meeting.



# According to the UN rapporteur, it is impossible to speak of a right to health in Gaza, which is under attack by Israel

United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health Tlaleng Mofokeng stated that it is impossible to speak of the right to health in Gaza, adding that the situation in the besieged area is deteriorating even further.

Mofokeng, who is in Geneva, Switzerland, to attend the 59th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, answered questions from an AA correspondent about the situation in Gaza, which has been subjected to intense Israeli attacks and blockade. Mofokeng said, “It is impossible to speak of the right to health in Gaza. Both access to health facilities and the fundamental determinants of health have been under attack since day one. The situation is getting worse. We now have food aid that is being used to target civilians who are on the brink of starvation and trying to obtain basic food items for themselves and their families. We are also facing a situation in which humanitarian assistance is obstructed, UN agencies cannot reach people in the occupied Palestinian territories unhindered to deliver aid, and thus the violence continues.”

Describing what is happening as “colonial imperialist violence” against people who cannot defend themselves, Mofokeng said that the situation in Gaza cannot be defined as a war in terms of the balance of power. Mofokeng continued, “Therefore, in a context of global leadership that keeps failing, we must acknowledge that genocidal plans will lead to the kind of catastrophic events we are witnessing

today. This is not inevitable. This situation is not a natural progression of events as they should be, yet it is being portrayed as though it were.”

**“We must reject the lack of accountability”**

Pointing out that they continue to count the dead in Gaza, Mofokeng emphasized that hundreds of thousands of people are also missing. She continued: “I would like to remind the global community that silence is not diplomacy. There has never been a moment when silence was heard so loudly from every segment of society. We saw that even the humanitarian aid being taken to Gaza on the Madleen ship belonging to the Freedom Flotilla Coalition was attacked, yet there was more silence and more indifference. This is not normal. Nothing about what is happening is normal. It has been normalized. It was portrayed as something we had to accept.

However, we must reject this impunity [for Israel]. We must reject the lack of accountability.”

UN Rapporteur Mofokeng noted that, to prevent what is happening in Gaza, international human rights laws and standards, as well as the UN Charter and other legal instruments, are already in place.





# 88 Palestinians killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza in the last 24 hours

Thirteen Palestinians, including children and forcibly displaced persons, were killed and many others injured in attacks carried out by the Israeli army on the Gaza Strip in the early hours of the morning.

The number of people killed in Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, has increased by 88 in the last 24 hours, reaching 56,500. In a written statement issued by the Ministry of Health in Gaza, the latest information on casualties and injuries resulting from Israel's ongoing attacks was shared.

It was reported that 88 Palestinians, mostly women and children, were killed and 365 injured in the past 24 hours due to Israeli attacks on Gaza. It was stated that the number of deaths in Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7, 2023, has risen to 56,500 and the number of injured has reached 133,419. Since Israel broke the ceasefire on March 18, 6,175 people have been killed and 21,378 injured in attacks on Gaza. Thirteen Palestinians, including children and forcibly displaced persons, were killed and many others injured in Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip this morning. According to information obtained from hospital sources, Israeli soldiers continue to carry out attacks in various regions of the Gaza Strip. In a bomb attack carried out by the Israeli army on the Tuffah neighborhood in the east of Gaza City in the northern Gaza Strip, five Palestinians lost their lives. The injured were taken to the Ahli Baptist Hospital. The Zawiya market in the central part of Gaza City was also targeted by an Israeli drone. One Palestinian was killed and 15 were injured in the attack.

The Israeli army also struck a house in the Zeitoun neighborhood in the southeast of Gaza City. In the attack, two children aged 2 and 3 lost their lives, and many others were injured. A tent sheltering forcibly displaced Palestinians near the Samir Junction in central Gaza City was hit by an Israeli drone, injuring many Palestinians. The Israeli army bombed tents of forcibly displaced Palestinians in the Al-Mawasi area of Khan Yunis in the south of the Gaza Strip. In the attack, five Palestinians, including two children, were killed. In another attack in the same area, six people were killed and 20 were injured. According to eyewitnesses, the Tuffah neighborhood in the east of Gaza City and the town of Jabalia and its surroundings witnessed a violent night as Israeli forces bombed and shelled some buildings.

In an attack on the house of the Al-Ashi family in the Sabra neighborhood in southern Gaza City, four Palestinians were killed. It was reported that there are still injured people trapped under the rubble.

In the Al-Arayis area of the Shujaiyya neighborhood, one Palestinian was killed in a drone strike. In an attack on Palestinians waiting for humanitarian aid near Wadi Gaza, eight people were killed, and in a similar attack in the Al-Shakoush area in the northwest of Rafah, five people were killed and 25 were injured. Israeli army opens fire on people waiting for aid in Gaza, 5 killed According to health sources, Israeli soldiers opened fire on Palestinians waiting near a humanitarian aid distribution center in the Al-Shakoush area in the northwest of Rafah. According to initial reports, five people were killed and 25 injured in the attack.

According to United Nations reports, over 550 Palestinians have been killed at distribution points in the Gaza Strip, established last month and not recognized as legitimate by the

international community and operated under the guidance of the U.S. and Israel. These sites have turned into "mass execution zones" for civilians, while Palestinians are faced with both starvation and the humiliating policies of forced displacement.

**Israel has killed 580 Palestinians at aid distribution points in Gaza since May 27** It was reported that 580 Palestinians have been killed and 4,216 injured since May 27 in attacks by the Israeli army on so-called humanitarian aid distribution centers in the Gaza Strip, operated under the "Gaza Humanitarian Aid Foundation" backed by the U.S. and Israel. In a written statement by the Media Office of the government in Gaza, information was provided regarding the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli forces at aid distribution centers established in the south and central parts of Gaza between May 27 and June 29. The statement noted that the death toll from Israeli army attacks on these aid distribution centers—referred to by the public as "death traps"—has so far risen to 580, with 4,216 injured and 39 people still missing.

**"Death Traps"** Since May 27, Israel has activated the so-called "Gaza Humanitarian Aid Foundation," guided by the U.S. and Israel, to carry out alleged aid distributions outside the supervision of the United Nations (UN) and international humanitarian organizations.

However, this entity is not recognized by the UN and is rejected by Palestinian groups. Hamas describes this system as "death traps." Since March 2, Israel has kept all land border crossings into the Gaza Strip closed. While hundreds of trucks carrying aid are being prevented from entering Gaza, only a limited number of vehicles are allowed to pass through the Kerem Abu Salim crossing. However, Gaza needs at least 500 aid trucks per day. As the Israeli army continues its attacks on Gaza since October 7, 2023, a major humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding due to heavy bombardment, starvation, forced displacement, and the destruction of infrastructure.

Despite calls for a ceasefire from the international community and the International Court of Justice, Israel continues its attacks, which have reached the level of genocide.

**Israeli settlers seize Palestinian land, attack Palestinians in the West Bank, and confiscate livestock** Israeli settlers who have seized Palestinian land attacked a Bedouin community in the eastern occupied West Bank and seized a herd of cattle belonging to a Palestinian in Northern Jordan Valley. According to a written statement from the Organization for the Defense of Bedouin Rights (BEYDER), information was shared regarding the settlers' attacks. According to the statement, a group of Israelis, under the protection of the Israeli army, raided the Arab al-Malihah Bedouin community located north of Jericho in the eastern West Bank. The statement noted that this attack is "part of a deliberate plan for the forced evacuation of local residents through repeated raids and daily restrictions aimed at expanding Jewish settlements." On the other hand, according to the Palestinian official news agency WAFA, Israeli settlers seized a herd of cattle belonging to a Palestinian while they were grazing in the Humma area in the Northern Jordan Valley of the northern West Bank.

In a statement from the Palestine Red Crescent, it was reported that their teams in Hebron intervened to treat four people who were assaulted by Israeli settlers.

Usama Muhamira, an activist from the Committee Against the Apartheid Wall (Wall of Shame) and Jewish Settlements, told Anadolu Agency (AA): "Israeli settlers wearing military uniforms attacked Palestinians in the village of Khirbet Ummu Khair in Masafir Yatta." Muhamira stated that four Palestinians, including a woman, were injured in the attack and that Red Crescent personnel treated them on the spot. According to a statement by the Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission affiliated with the Palestinian Authority, ongoing attacks by Israeli settlers forced 30 Palestinian Bedouin communities, consisting of 323 families, to leave their homes and migrate elsewhere between October 7, 2023, and the end of May 2025. In the occupied West Bank alone, Israeli settlers carried out 415 attacks during the month of May. Palestinian call to the international community: "Stop Israel's attacks in the West Bank" The Palestinian Authority has called on the international community to take deterrent measures to stop the crimes committed by Israeli settlers who have intensified their attacks in the occupied West Bank.

In a written statement, the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that the international community must assume its responsibility on the basis of international law and legitimacy to stop fanatical Israeli attacks on civilians and to implement relevant United Nations (UN) resolutions. The statement noted that the recent mass attacks on Palestinian villages and towns "point to a clear division of roles between armed and organized Jewish militias and the occupying Israeli army," and called on the international community to take effective action to stop "settler gangs' attacks on Palestinians, their lands, properties, and sacred sites."

**Palestine: Israeli Attacks Destroy 74% of Gaza's Telecommunications Network** It has been reported that Israeli attacks on Gaza have destroyed 74% of the telecommunications network. According to a written statement from the Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications, Deputy Minister Huda al-Wahidi spoke at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Board of Governors meeting held in Geneva under the United Nations (UN). Wahidi stated that 580 cell towers and fiber networks have been destroyed in Israeli attacks in Gaza, resulting in 74% damage to the telecommunications infrastructure. She estimated the current material damage at \$164 million and expected damage over the next five years to reach \$736 million. Wahidi noted the ongoing deterioration of Gaza's digital infrastructure and called for the implementation of the UN's 2024 resolution that foresees the reconstruction of the Palestinian telecommunications sector. Regarding the situation in the West Bank, Wahidi said that damage caused by Israeli military raids and attacks on the sector is estimated at \$215 million. Israel's continuous attacks on the Gaza Strip not only target civilians but are also deliberately aimed at destroying the region's communication infrastructure. Most recently, on June 21, it was announced that communication and internet services were cut off again in northern Gaza due to Israeli attacks. No Decision from Israeli Cabinet Meeting on Gaza Agenda

According to a report by The Times of Israel, a cabinet meeting led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took place concerning the ongoing attacks on Gaza since October 7, 2023, and the prisoner exchange agreement. The report added that the Israeli cabinet is scheduled to meet again tomorrow with the same agenda.

**Israeli Media: U.S. Preparing to Pressure Tel Aviv for Ceasefire in Gaza** According to Israeli media reports, during his visit to Washington, Israeli Minister Dermer is expected to discuss ending the Gaza attacks, normalization steps Israel signed with Arab countries, and regional issues such as expanding the Abraham Accords. Haaretz newspaper, citing senior White House officials, reported that senior figures from former President Donald Trump's team will pressure Dermer to push for an end to attacks on Gaza and a prisoner return agreement.

U.S. officials are said to tell Dermer that Israel's insistence on "eliminating Hamas" will be postponed for the future. Yedioth Ahronoth noted that Netanyahu's recent emphasis on prioritizing the Israeli captives in Gaza, instead of the repeated "destroy Hamas" and "absolute victory" rhetoric, indicates a possible ceasefire deal in Gaza.

Channel 12, citing Israeli sources, wrote that the army has asked the government to decide on the next step in the war. The report claimed the two options were either to complete control over Gaza or to make a prisoner exchange agreement, with the army preferring the latter.

Dermer's trip is said to have been planned as preparation for Netanyahu's expected visit to Washington in the next two weeks, with the U.S. wanting an agreement before that visit. Channel 13 also stated that the army informed the government there are no significant targets left in Gaza that can be reached without risking the lives of the remaining hostages, after about 19 months of ground attacks. Former U.S. President Donald Trump, who ended the Israel-Iran conflict with a unilateral ceasefire on June 24 after 12 days, posted "Make a deal in Gaza, bring back the captives," which was interpreted as a message to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu.

**In the Occupied West Bank, Israeli Settlers Attack Israeli Soldiers** According to a statement from the Israeli army, a group of Israeli settlers attacked soldiers with pepper spray, threw stones, and damaged military vehicles. The statement said that during the dispersal of the crowd with sound bombs, one of the settlers was injured.

**Israeli Soldier's Defense: "I Thought They Were Palestinians"** The statement also noted that an Israeli soldier in the occupied West Bank fired three shots into the air because he mistook individuals throwing stones at a military vehicle for Palestinians. It was highlighted that a child might have been injured during this incident and that an investigation has been launched regarding the source of the bullet. Haaretz reported that the events started when a 14-year-old Israeli was injured by soldiers after allegedly throwing stones. It was also determined that the child was not injured by rubber bullets but by live ammunition during hospital examinations.

# Turkistan: A City Where Spiritual Heritage Meets Modern Tourism



**Recognized as one of the spiritual capitals of the Turkic world, the city of Turkistan in Kazakhstan is becoming one of Central Asia’s most popular tourism destinations.**

With major projects such as airports, caravanserais, and hotels undertaken by Turkish construction companies, the city stands out in the fields of religious, cultural, and gastronomic tourism. Deputy Governor of Turkistan, Zulfikar Joldasov, emphasized that Turkish and Kazakh societies are one nation, expressing their solidarity with the brotherly Turkic states in every field. Joldasov noted that Turkistan holds high tourism potential, and recalled that the Republic of Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize Kazakhstan and that steps were taken in 1993 to establish a joint university. Stating that this region is not foreign to the Turkish people, Joldasov said, “We know that Turkey is highly developed in tourism. A large portion of people living in Kazakhstan have visited Turkey at least once in their lives. We also observe a growing interest from our Turkish brothers in this place with each passing day. We hope that everyone living in Turkey will one day see the city of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi.”

Expressing satisfaction with Turkish companies' interest in investing in the region, Joldasov added: “Our airport and the large caravanserai, which is a brand symbol of our city, were built by Turkish companies. The International Turkic-Kazakh University also holds a distinguished position in our



region. We have direct flights from our airport to Istanbul twice a week. With its 2,000-year history, the historic city of Turkistan is a cradle of scholars. Thousands of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi’s students reached as far as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and European countries, spreading our religion and serving our civilization.

We are pleased when people visit this spiritual atmosphere. In recent months, the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB) hosted us in Istanbul. Today, we are hosting them here in Turkistan. We are providing all possible support to Turkish travel agencies and tourism entrepreneurs. Interest from travel agencies is growing day by day. We continue to strengthen our mutual feelings of solidarity and cooperation.”

“We Also Observe a Significant Flow from Regional Countries” Nurdaulet Medeuov, Tourism Director of the Turkistan Governorate, also stated that there is international interest in Turkistan and that approximately 600,000 tourists visited the city in 2024. Medeuov noted that the main reason behind Turkish tourists’ interest in the city lies in shared culture and faith, and continued: “We are also observing a significant flow from regional countries. As of May 2025, direct flights to our city have started from Abu Dhabi, Kuwait, and Samarkand, in addition to Istanbul. I believe the number of international destinations will increase with each passing month. Until 2019, there were 22 hotels in Turkistan. In five years, we have increased this number to 68. The large caravanserai built by Turkish companies includes an 8D cinema and traditional nighttime water shows, which attract great interest from visitors.”

**SOURCE: VEDAT KURT**



# Constitutional Court of Kosovo Orders MPs to Elect Assembly Speaker Within 30 Days



**The Constitutional Court of Kosovo has announced that the Assembly session, which began on April 15 and is still ongoing, has not been conducted in accordance with the Constitution and that Members of Parliament must elect the Speaker and Deputy Speakers of the Assembly within 30 days.**

The Constitutional Court of Kosovo announced last night its decision regarding the appeal filed by 11 Members of Parliament. In its decision, the Court concluded that the session that began on April 15 and is still ongoing has not been conducted in a manner consistent with the Constitution. The decision stated: “Elected Members of Parliament are obligated to fulfill their constitutional duty to constitute the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo through the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speakers, no later than 30 days from the date this decision enters into force.” On the other hand, uncertainty remains regarding what will happen if MPs do not comply with the Court’s ruling.

**Kosovo Unable to Elect Assembly Speaker** The plenary session of the Kosovo Assembly, which began on April 15, continues every two days due to the failure to elect a Speaker. Today, MPs will meet for the 38th time to attempt to elect the Speaker and Deputy Speakers. The Vetëvendosje (Self-Determination Movement), led by Prime Minister Albin Kurti and winner of the general elections, has nominated Albulena Haxhiu for the position of Assembly Speaker. However, Haxhiu lacks the support of other political parties to be elected.

Although other parties have indicated they may consider offering support if Vetëvendosje changes its nominee, the party insists on keeping Haxhiu as its candidate. Vetëvendosje recently announced that if Haxhiu fails to be elected, they would support holding an early general election alongside the local elections scheduled for October 12.

**General Election Results** According to the official results of the February 9 election, of the 100 seats in the 120-member Assembly, Vetëvendosje won 48, the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) 24, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) 20, and AAK/NISMA 8. The 20 seats reserved for non-majority communities were distributed as follows: Serbian List 9, Turkish Democratic Party of Kosovo (KDTP) 2, IRDK 1, NDS 1, SPO 1, VAKAT 1, PLE 1, SDU 1, PAI 1, JGP 1, and PREBK 1. In Kosovo, the process of forming a new government can begin only after the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speakers. To elect the Speaker and secure a vote of confidence for the new government, support from 61 members in the 120-seat Assembly is required.

# President of Azerbaijan Aliyev: Long live the unity and brotherhood of Turkey and Azerbaijan



**President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said, "Know that you have 10 million brothers in Azerbaijan. And Azerbaijanis know that we have more than 80 million Turkish brothers. Long live the unity and brotherhood of Turkey and Azerbaijan."**

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev stated that Turkey built tens of thousands of new homes in the earthquake zone in a short time, saying, "This shows Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's devotion, love, and strong will for his people. This is the manifestation of a strong Turkey. Only a strong state can carry out such large-scale reconstruction and construction work in such a short period."

Aliyev spoke at the Key Handover and Drawing Ceremony of the 250,000th Disaster Housing Unit in the Azerbaijan Neighborhood in Kahramanmaraş. Expressing condolences for those who lost their lives in the earthquakes of February 6, 2023, Aliyev said that the Azerbaijani people regarded this tragedy as their own.

He noted that tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis fulfilled their brotherhood duty by helping the earthquake victims. Recalling that rescue operations and then reconstruction efforts began immediately under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Aliyev said, "Tens of thousands of new homes were provided in a short time. This demonstrates Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's devotion, love, and strong will for his people. This is the manifestation of a strong Turkey. Only a strong state can carry out such large-scale reconstruction and construction work in such a short time." Aliyev reminded that they sent teams consisting of more than 1,000 personnel to the earthquake zone, adding that Azerbaijani search and rescue teams rescued 53 people from the rubble, and 3,000 people were treated in the field hospital established by Azerbaijan.

## "The Turkish people's solidarity with us gave us strength"

Aliyev emphasized that Azerbaijan has always stood by Turkey, and Turkey has

always stood by Azerbaijan, and said that being in Kahramanmaraş today together with President Erdoğan is a reflection of the friendship and unity between the two countries.

He pointed out that during the Karabakh War, they stood shoulder to shoulder with President Erdoğan, stating, "The political and moral support Erdoğan gave us from the very first hours of the war, the solidarity of the Turkish people with us, gave us strength. We restored historical justice. Today, the Azerbaijani people live comfortably and safely on their ancestral lands."

Aliyev also noted that the establishment of the Azerbaijan Neighborhood was a very positive development, saying, "We are always by each other's side in both good times and bad. We strengthen each other. Today, the unity and brotherhood of Turkey and Azerbaijan

are not only important in our region but are a significant factor globally. It is a symbol of security, cooperation, development, and brotherhood."

Aliyev emphasized that the declaration signed with President Erdoğan in Shusha four years ago brought Turkey-Azerbaijan relations to the highest level, saying, "The Shusha Declaration officially elevated our relations to the level of alliance. We are friends, brothers, and allies. In the political, economic, energy, transportation, and military fields, the two brotherly countries, Turkey and Azerbaijan, are advancing with faith and success."

## "You have 10 million brothers in Azerbaijan"

Expressing his pleasure at visiting Kahramanmaraş for the first time, Aliyev continued:

"The people of Kahramanmaraş showed resilience during the earthquake. They knew that behind them stood a strong leader, Erdoğan, and a strong Turkey. This shows the loyalty of the people of Kahramanmaraş to their state and their leader. I extend the respect and love of the Azerbaijani people to all those living in the earthquake zone. Know that you have 10 million brothers in Azerbaijan. And Azerbaijanis know that we have more than 80 million Turkish brothers. Long live the unity and brotherhood of Turkey and Azerbaijan."



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# Uzbek-Turkish Business Forum Held in Tashkent, the Capital of Uzbekistan



The Uzbek-Turkish Business Forum was held in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, with the participation of members of the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM).

Organized by TİM with the support of the Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the forum brought together more than 30 TİM-member companies, numerous Uzbek businesspeople, and senior officials. Speaking at the forum's opening session, Birol Celep, a board member of TİM, stated that TİM represents more than 150,000 exporters and encompasses 61 exporter associations operating in 27 sectors.

Celep emphasized that through trade delegations, fairs, buyer missions, and various projects, TİM promotes Türkiye's production strength and product diversity on a global scale. He highlighted that historically, this region has played a vital role in trade, linking East and West through cities on the Silk Road route. Celep noted that Tashkent, one of those cities, continues today to serve as a regional logistics hub—just as it did in the past. In this context, he stressed the great importance of strengthening relations with Uzbekistan for TİM.

**“We aim to further strengthen our commercial presence in a dynamic market like Uzbekistan”**  
Celep stated that ties between Türkiye and Uzbekistan are growing stronger in every field, and that the forum would contribute significantly to further enhancing bilateral trade relations. Pointing out that Uzbekistan is one of Türkiye's key trade partners, Celep noted that Türkiye exported \$2.2 billion worth of goods to Uzbekistan last year, and \$457 million in the first quarter of this year.

He emphasized that Türkiye is Uzbekistan's fourth-largest export destination and fifth-largest import source. He added that the two countries aim to increase bilateral trade volume to \$5 billion in the short term and to \$10 billion in the long term.

Celep continued: “We must take more determined and strategic steps to reach this goal. Increasing cooperation in sectors such as defense, energy, chemicals, automotive, textiles, ready-to-wear, agriculture, and infrastructure is among our top priorities. As the export community, we aim to further strengthen our commercial presence in dynamic markets like Uzbekistan.”

He also noted that there is intense competition in every sector today, but Türkiye has proven itself with its quality and production infrastructure: **“Türkiye is a country that has distinguished itself and proven its capabilities in its fields. With our reliable supplier identity, we continue to offer goods and services to buyers worldwide.”** As part of the Uzbek-Turkish Business Forum, Uzbek and Turkish businesspeople held bilateral meetings to discuss cooperation and business opportunities. Several cooperation agreements were also signed between companies from both countries.



# The 65th General Assembly of PABSEC Held in Azerbaijan

The 65th General Assembly of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) was held in the capital Baku, hosted by the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan.



The session, chaired by Speaker of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan Sahiba Gafarova, was attended by Chairperson of the National Assembly of Bulgaria Nataliya Kiselova, Speaker of the Assembly of North Macedonia Afrim Gashi, PABSEC Secretary General Asaf Hacıyev, Head of the Turkish PABSEC Group Fatih Dönmez, and representatives from member countries.

Speaking at the General Assembly, Head of the Turkish PABSEC Group Dönmez emphasized that success in the fields of transportation and logistics is not only possible through national infrastructure investments, but also through cross-border cooperation and administrative coordination.

Stating that Turkey supports regional projects in this field, Dönmez said, “Projects such as the Middle Corridor, Zangezur, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars line are multi-dimensional development initiatives that not only have economic but also strategic and political implications.”

Dönmez noted that after Azerbaijan ensured its territorial integrity following the Second Karabakh War, a historic opportunity emerged for sustainable peace in the region, adding, “A peace agreement to be signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia will create positive effects not only in the South Caucasus but also throughout the Black Sea basin. As Turkey, we continue to support this process.”

Touching upon Israel's attacks on Gaza, Dönmez said, “We strongly condemn Israel's airstrikes against Iran, which come on top of the genocide that has been ongoing in Gaza for 20 months. These attacks, which clearly violate international law, are part of Israel's strategic destabilization policy. Ten PABSEC member countries have recognized Palestine. We invite the other member countries to recognize Palestine as well.”

Dönmez also stated that Turkey continues its mediation efforts to end the Ukraine-Russia war, expressing their hope that the meetings held in Istanbul on May 16 and June 2 would contribute to peace.

**“One of the underlying reasons for these wars is access to energy resources”**  
Speaking to members of the press, Dönmez said that the conflict between Israel and Iran, which has escalated to the level of war, has disrupted the peace of the region. Dönmez said, “It is not possible for us to accept Israel's actions aimed at destabilizing the region. Of course, we do not desire nuclear power in our region. If Israel possesses it, we are against Israel; if Iran possesses it, we are against Iran. But actions taken based on unfounded reasons that may lead to regional destabilization benefit no one. The Israeli government clearly revealed its intentions with the massacre it carried out in Gaza. We hope common sense will prevail, and we will emerge from this war environment as soon as possible. We should be talking about peace, not war. One of the underlying reasons for these wars is access to energy resources. Let us use energy not for war, but for peace.”

PABSEC Chairmanship Transferred to Bulgaria  
At the end of the meeting, the PABSEC Chairmanship was handed over from Azerbaijan to Bulgaria. Speaker Gafarova transferred the position to Chairperson of the Bulgarian National Assembly Kiselova.



# Russian Deputy Prime Minister Novak: Turkey Is Russia’s Friendly Partner

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Novak assessed the relationship between Turkey and Russia. Novak noted that the trade relationship between the two countries is increasing year by year.



Novak answered journalists’ questions after the 19th Term of the Turkish Russian Intergovernmental Joint Commission (IGJC) for Trade and Economic Cooperation (KEK) meeting held in the capital, Moscow. Emphasizing that Turkey and Russia are friendly countries, Novak stated, “Despite all challenges and global turbulence, Turkey is Russia’s friendly partner. Trade and trade volume between our countries are developing and growing, and the relations are strengthening.”

Noting that last year’s trade volume between the two countries approached 60 billion dollars, Novak said, “This represents a 6.7 percent increase compared to the previous year. We are continuously making progress in the development of trade and economic relations.”

Novak noted that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Russian President Vladimir Putin had set a target to raise bilateral trade volume to 100 billion dollars and said they continue working in that direction.

**Steps Taken to Increase Trade**

Novak stated that Russia and Turkey are working through governments, ministries, and other relevant bodies, saying, “First, we are removing administrative barriers. At our meeting, I discussed this in detail with my co chair, Trade Minister Ömer Bolat.”

He highlighted that cooperation between the two countries is particularly prominent in energy, industry, transportation, agriculture, social affairs, and tourism: “Through various institutions, we are implementing investment projects that will increase employment, tax revenues, and trade volume, and will

strengthen our countries’ economies.”

Novak noted that a record number of Russian tourists visited Turkey last year, stating that the visitor count, which exceeded 6 million in 2024, is expected to increase further this year. He mentioned joint measures taken to make visits more comfortable, saying, “We are jointly implementing measures to ensure security during visits and to enable Russian tourists in Turkey to make payments for services.”

Novak emphasized that the two countries have significant interaction in education, culture, and sports, stating, “Our relations are developing across a broad spectrum. This is confirmed by the level of interaction between our countries’ leaders, ongoing official contacts, and the governments’ mandates to enhance our trade and economic relations.”

**Strengthening Cooperation in Energy**

Novak said that Russia supplies significant amounts of oil, petroleum products, and coal to Turkey: “Turkey also acts as a transit country for shipments to Southeast Europe. We have successfully implemented this cooperation.”

Pointing to the successful operation of the Blue Stream and TurkStream gas pipelines, Novak said, “We are currently running major joint projects. TurkStream has two lines—one serving the domestic market and the other supplying Europe. These projects are working successfully. We look forward to maintaining long term cooperation in natural gas supply and are ready to expand it. We are making good progress in this direction.”

Regarding Rosatom’s construction of the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant

(NPP), Novak said, “This is our flagship project in the energy sector. It is also very important for Turkey, as it will be the country’s first nuclear power plant. This is an opportunity to gain expertise in the field, train personnel, and implement such a large scale, multi billion dollar project.”

Novak noted that construction of the plant is proceeding according to the designated schedule, adding, “I believe the first unit of the plant will be commissioned in the near future, within a year. We are giving special importance to the implementation of this project. It is a key project in the field of nuclear energy and its peaceful use.”

He emphasized that they are ready to continue cooperation in building new facilities to meet the needs of the Turkish energy sector, saying, “The economic feasibility of constructing another nuclear power plant is being examined. This work is being carried out in accordance with the Turkish side’s interests to find mutually acceptable economic models. As Russia, we would be very pleased to participate in the implementation of this project.”

## Economic Impact of Global Turbulence

Novak stated that Russia supports peaceful resolution of various conflicts, adding, “Today, as the world is indeed going through a turbulent period, we are facing many challenges and uncertainties.”

He pointed out that, in addition to military conflicts, tariff and economic wars among major economies are occurring, and said: “We are seeing volatility in global commodity markets, including the oil market. This is certainly a rather difficult situation for the global economy. Therefore, we believe that resolving tariff wars among countries, without worsening the general situation regarding supply chains, logistics changes, and rising costs, is essential. Because today relationships that were built are largely collapsing, and of course that is not good for the global economy. Russia favors cooperation, the development of stability, and the pursuit of trade and economic relations, and we are building partnerships with our friendly countries, including Turkey.”

# Trump: Sanctions on Iran could be lifted if it behaves peacefully.



U.S. President Donald Trump said he could lift sanctions on Iran if the country “acts peacefully and causes no harm.”

Speaking to Fox News about current developments, Trump stated that both sides had become very exhausted by the conflict that began with Israel’s attacks on Iran. He also said U.S. airstrikes on Iran were successful, and rejected claims that Iran had transferred enriched uranium elsewhere before the strikes. Trump said, “They didn’t move anything elsewhere except for what they needed to survive. They didn’t even think what we did was possible.”

Reminding that sanctions on Iran are still in place, Trump responded to a statement suggesting China could buy oil from Iran after the ceasefire: “No, I didn’t say that. Sanctions are still in effect. But if they do what they’re supposed to, if they are peaceful and cooperate with us, if they’re not going to do any more harm, then I would lift the sanctions.”

When asked whether there were any countries interested in joining the Abraham Accords following the Iran-Israel ceasefire, Trump replied: “Yes, there are some really great countries there now, and I think we’ll start bringing them in because Iran was the real problem.”

Trump also said he believed Iran would eventually join the Abraham Accords at one point, but added that he currently doesn’t know whether Syria wants to join.

**Trump Again Criticizes Mamdani**

Trump also responded to questions about Zohran Mamdani, who won the Democratic Party’s mayoral primary in New York this week, saying: “He’s a communist. I think he’s terrible for New York.”

Repeating that he was very surprised by Mamdani’s primary win, Trump said: “Whoever becomes mayor of New York needs to keep things under control, or the federal government is going to be very tough on them financially.”

In the Democratic Party’s mayoral primary held on June 24 in New York, Zohran Mamdani, a member of the New York State Assembly, unofficially emerged as the leading candidate for the general election scheduled for November 4.

Mamdani, a 33-year-old Muslim candidate of Indian descent born in Uganda, known for his democratic socialist identity, shocked traditional Democratic Party supporters by defeating 67-year-old former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who was considered his strongest rival.

Reacting to Mamdani’s victory in the primaries on his social media platform Truth Social, President Donald Trump wrote: “The Democrats have gone too far. Mamdani, a 100% communist lunatic, has won.”

# Turkic World Summer School Program Kicks Off

**The opening ceremony of the “2nd Turkic World Summer School Program,” organized by the Haydar Aliyev Eurasian Studies Center at Ibn Haldun University, was held.**

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ibn Haldun University (IHU) Board of Trustees Vice Chairman Necmeddin Bilal Erdoğan stated that the world is going through a complex, uncertain, and turbulent period.

Erdoğan emphasized that during times of uncertainty, it is important to give people hope for the future, which is why they place great importance on the Turkic World Studies Center.

He noted that while in the past it was more possible to build a career through diplomas, today, having expertise and a certain level of competence in a specific field has become much more critical. He added that research centers are becoming increasingly significant within the structure of universities.

He further noted that even in fields like international relations and political science, expertise in just one area is no longer sufficient for fieldwork or issue analysis. “Therefore,” he said, “we also hope that our increasingly strong center will include economists, engineers specializing in energy, and environmental engineers alongside international relations and political science experts.”

Erdoğan highlighted that the Organization of Turkic States’ 2040 Vision includes many topics that concern the entire Turkic World. “These topics are not limited to international relations or energy security,” he said. “Issues such as transportation, economy, sociology, and topics that concern public opinion and society as a whole are all part of this vision. As a university, we want to provide strong support for work in this area. The master’s program we plan to conduct in four countries is actually a reflection of this vision.”

Erdoğan stressed that in addition to Turkey, a Turkic World master’s program will also be launched in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan. “In this way, we need to raise intellectuals who are familiar with the entire Turkic World. Of course, the Turkic World is also a ‘Kızıl Elma’ [Red Apple – a common cultural ideal]. But reaching this goal depends on removing all the borders between us. To remove these borders, we need to build friendships, strengthen dialogue, and achieve the ideal of unity in language,” he said.

Erdoğan concluded his remarks as follows: “Amidst the uncertainties in the world, we need the Turkic World to stand shoulder to shoulder and be equipped with dynamics that

allow us to draw strength from one another. If there is to be a new paradigm in the post-Western era, one that promises more peace and stability, and a renewed framework of international law, then countries that believe in this must come together to discuss and shape this new paradigm. I believe that, thanks to the influence of



the younger, intellectual audience and academics here today, the paradigm set by the next generations will offer us a more peaceful and stable world order.”

## **“We need a fairer and more solution-oriented system”**

Rector of Ibn Haldun University, Prof. Dr. Atilla Arkan, also pointed out that the uncertainty and chaos in the world will increase even further over the next ten years. “As President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has emphasized for many years, the current system has lost the ability to offer fair, accessible, and feasible solutions. Yet, we need a system that is fairer and more capable of producing solutions,” he said. Stating that the participants of the “2nd Turkic World Summer School Program” will discuss the problems of the world, Turkey, and the Turkic World for a month, Arkan said, “In a world where chaos and uncertainty await us, the fundamental strength of countries lies in regional cooperation. Therefore, as the Turkic World, we are in great need of regional collaborations. One of the most important elements in this regional cooperation is undoubtedly developing intellectual leadership, intellectual capacity, and a shared intellectual understanding. As Ibn Haldun University, we are continuously taking steps to establish intellectual partnership and brotherhood not only with the Turkic World but also with all countries in our spiritual geography, including the Middle East, that seek justice.”

Deputy Director General for the Caucasus at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ayşe Uzer, noted that the Turkic World is now advancing step by step toward unity not only in language, history, culture, and sports but also in diplomacy, politics, academia, economy, technology, and defense. Explaining that the Organization of Turkic States is the institutional expression of this shared vision, Uzer said, “With its increasingly deepening cooperation mechanisms, our organization has now become an actor with tangible impact on the ground, beyond just a declaration of intent. From our universities to think tanks, all institutions are key elements that reinforce the scientific, cultural, and humanistic aspects of this journey.

Programs like these make it possible for younger generations to establish more genuine and organic ties with the Turkic World.”

Deputy Secretary General of the Organization of Turkic States, Sadi Jafarov, emphasized that the organization is becoming stronger and gaining greater international recognition.

Jafarov stated that they aim to deepen this unity and act with a shared consciousness for the Turkic states, and noted that in the face of global security threats, conflicts, and socio-economic instability, it is now more important than ever for countries to preserve their stability.

Chairman of the Turkey-Azerbaijan Interparliamentary Friendship Group and AK Party Member of Parliament, Şamil Ayrim, stated that nations that do not protect their history, culture, and civilizational heritage are destined for disappointment, and added:

“If we want to build an honorable future, we must protect, learn, preserve, and pass on our culture, which serves as a bridge from the past to the future. Today, the Turkic World has entered a period of geopolitical awakening. With a population of over 200 million, rich energy resources, strategic location, and shared cultural heritage, we carry great potential. Now, as a rising power, we will also solve some of the issues facing the Turkic World together.”

## **Nearly a thousand students applied from 28 countries**

Nearly a thousand students from 28 countries applied to the “2nd Turkic World Summer School Program,” organized with the support of Ibn Haldun University, the Organization of Turkic States, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), and universities from Turkey and the Turkic World.

Within the scope of the summer school, regionalization movements, developments in the Eurasian geography, fundamental issues of the Turkic World, solutions, and cooperation potential will be evaluated from a scientific perspective.



Erdoğan pointed out that the issues facing society—whether in the social sciences, natural sciences, medicine, or engineering—can only be solved through the collaboration of multiple areas of expertise. He gave the example of how biologists, chemists, physicists, and engineers play crucial roles in many medical studies.

# Healing on the Table, Remedy in the Body



When we hear the word basil, most of us first recall its intoxicating scent—then those elegant leaves, swaying between shades of green and purple, come to mind. It graces our tables as the crown of salads, the refreshing touch in yogurt, or the secret behind cooling sherbets on hot summer days. But basil is not just a flavor that delights the palate or a fragrance that fills the air. It is a delicate yet powerful gift that nature offers to us. With the active compounds hidden in each of its leaves, it silently reaches the deepest parts of the body—sometimes soothing a headache, sometimes turning into a calm that quiets the soul. Naturally occurring substances in this plant—such as eugenol, linalool, and essential oils—have both antiseptic and relaxing effects on the body. Eugenol, in particular, can offer mild pain relief. Some varieties also contain antioxidant compounds that act like a shield, protecting cells from harm. Basil’s benefits for the stomach are also noteworthy. It may reduce bloating and help soothe the digestive system. It supports regular bowel movements and can help ease minor spasms. Its effects on the nervous system are equally significant. Consumed as a tea, basil may calm the nerves and offer gentle relief during periods of stress. And one of the most recommended drinks of summer: basil sherbet. Prepared with cold water, a splash of lemon, and a touch of honey, it becomes a refreshing, invigorating beverage. On hot days, it not only cools the body but also supports its balance. The fact that it is natural and free of additives is yet another advantage.



# TRNC President Tatar says direct flights to the TRNC should not be blocked

President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), Ersin Tatar, emphasized the necessity of launching direct flights to Ercan Airport in the country, stating, “If there are direct flights from the UK, especially from London, it would benefit both our economy and tourism. It would also strengthen ties between the British and Turkish Cypriots. If a company plans such a flight, it should not be obstructed.”

Tatar made these remarks in London, the capital of the United Kingdom, where he is conducting official visits, during interviews with AA and TRT. Reminding that the UK is a guarantor state in Cyprus, he noted that Britain was a sovereign power on the island until the 1960s. Explaining that the Turkish Cypriot people were not a problematic group under British rule, Tatar said that Turkish Cypriots served as police officers during British administration and fought against those trying to annex Cyprus to Greece.

## "The British meet more with the Greek Cypriots"

Tatar noted that the British, who left the island following the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus on August 16, 1960, retained two sovereign military bases in the southern part of the island. “These bases are very important for the UK, especially nowadays. Britain withdrew after securing two bases. Because the bases are in the south, unfortunately, their relations with the Greek Cypriots have progressed further. In the past year, (Greek Cypriot leader Nikos) Christodoulides met with the British Prime Minister three times,” he said. Saying, “There are great injustices committed against us by the UK,” Tatar pointed out that there are no direct flights or direct trade with the TRNC. “I have many British friends and close relations with British MPs. There are many Britons who support and love us politically. However, we are unable to overcome the British establishment, the so-called institutional system, and we continue to face these injustices,” he added.

## Meeting with UK Minister of State Doughty

Tatar said he met with Stephen Doughty, the UK Minister of State for Europe and North America. Expressing his expectation for the UK to take steps to ease the isolation imposed on Turkish Cypriots, especially after Brexit, Tatar noted that instead of easing, pressure has increased. He stressed that the presence of UK bases on the island has made Southern Cyprus a target for Israelis, saying: “If



you follow the news in Southern Cyprus, you will see that the Greek Cypriot public is very uncomfortable. There are those who call Southern Cyprus 'Little Israel' due to Christodoulides' policies. Many Israelis have settled in Larnaca and Limassol.” Tatar reiterated that Turkish Cypriots are one of the founding and equal sovereign partners of the Republic of Cyprus established in 1960, and noted that the UK was one of the guarantors of that system.

## "We suffered genocide, and the UK just watched from its bases"

Tatar reminded that today, around 30,000 Britons live in the TRNC and more than 300,000 Turkish Cypriots live in the UK. He added: “Despite everything, and despite the injustices committed against us, we are living as an independent state in Cyprus. I told Doughty that if conditions are met and a common ground is established, we could enter a new negotiation process, but for that, the sovereignty of Turkish Cypriots must be recognized. Because the UK was the architect of the system. When the UK left Cyprus, it helped set up the system in that form.” Tatar emphasized that the UK did not respond to attempts to annex the island to Greece at the time, saying: “Those advocating for enosis (union with Greece) killed thousands of our people. We experienced genocide. They tried everything to wipe out the Turkish Cypriots. And the UK just watched from its bases. We trusted in our Turkey, fought our struggle, experienced displacement, lost thousands of our people, and now we have our own state.” He underlined that if there is to be a

settlement in Cyprus, it must be based on a two-state solution, and that it is impossible for Cyprus to reunify, for Turkey to withdraw from the island, or for the guarantor system to be abolished. Tatar said he conveyed to Doughty that the UK should shape its policy based on this reality.

## "If a direct flight is planned, it should not be blocked"

Tatar stated that the TRNC can only connect with the world through Turkey. “The right to travel is also a right of Turkish Cypriots,” he said. He noted that Ercan Airport serves over 10 million passengers annually and is one of the most important airports on the island and in the region, even larger than the two airports in the Greek Cypriot Administration. Responding to past claims that direct flights to Ercan were not permitted due to security concerns, Tatar said there is no such issue and added: “If there are direct flights from the UK, especially from London, it would benefit both our economy and tourism. It would also strengthen ties between the British and Turkish Cypriots. If a company plans such a flight, it should not be blocked.” Tatar stated that former UK minister and former Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith is one of the MPs supporting direct flights to the TRNC. He said that around 80 flights are operated daily from Turkey to Ercan Airport and that flights from Europe must first land in Turkey, even if no passengers board or disembark there. Tatar also noted that due to potential backlash, some meetings in the UK are held discreetly, but in every meeting, they make sure to explain the legitimacy of the TRNC’s position.



*Hasan Yiğit*

# Loyalty to the State: Building Trust and Belonging

The loyalty of a society to its state is one of the most fundamental elements that determines a country's peace, stability, and future. The survival of a state does not depend solely on its military power, economic capacity, or laws, but also on the trust, loyalty, and voluntary allegiance of its people. This loyalty is not one that develops out of fear or habit alone; it is the product of a sense of belonging, a shared past, and a shared future. When people show loyalty to a state, it means they feel represented by that state, believe their rights are protected, and trust that their needs are being met. Otherwise, loyalty gives way to alienation, distrust, and eventually, detachment.

It is natural for a state to expect loyalty from its citizens. Because the state ensures social order, protects against external threats, aims to establish justice, and provides various public services. In this respect, the state fulfills many vital functions that individuals cannot achieve on their own. However, for this system to continue, a one-sided expectation is not enough; it requires a mutual relationship of trust. The state protects the society, and the society, in turn, shows loyalty to the state. When this relationship is broken, society feels excluded, and the state feels under threat. The resulting atmosphere of distrust undermines the foundations of social peace. The foundation of a society's loyalty to the state is laid in childhood. The history taught in the education system, civic education, flag ceremonies in schools, national anthems, and symbols shape individuals' perceptions of the state. If this perception is positive, the state is seen as strong, protective, and just. However, this sense of belonging that begins in childhood is either reinforced or weakened as the individual gains life experience. The state's ability to deliver justice, provide services, and refrain from discrimination among its citizens are key determinants in the development of loyalty.

As the areas in which the state is present expand, its relationship with society becomes more complex. In the past, the state interacted with citizens mostly in matters of security and taxation, but today, it provides services in numerous fields such as health, education, social security, communication, and culture. The fair, prompt, and equal delivery of these services creates a sense of trust in the state. For example, if a citizen receives good care in a state hospital when sick, if there is equal opportunity

in education, and if justice is accessible in the courts, then this citizen will feel a stronger sense of loyalty to the state. In contrast, when faced with injustice, discrimination, or favoritism, loyalty gives way to resentment. In environments where society's sense of loyalty to the state weakens, serious problems arise. Sometimes this manifests as not voting, being indifferent to public order, or passive resistance. But if this feeling is nurtured over time, it may eventually lead to much deeper ruptures and divisions. History provides many examples of this. Many civil wars, uprisings, or separatist movements began when a segment of society felt excluded from the state. For this reason, one of the state's primary duties is to remain equally close to all its citizens—not only legally, but also emotionally.

Loyalty to the state is not a feeling tested only in difficult times. In daily life, a citizen's respect for public authority is also a reflection of this loyalty. Obeying traffic rules, paying taxes on time, protecting public property, voting in elections, or fulfilling military service obligations are all actions that result not only from civic consciousness but also from trust in the state. These behaviors are not only performed due to legal enforcement; if an individual has internalized a sense of responsibility toward the state, they occur voluntarily. Loyalty is not limited solely to an individual's approach toward the state; It is also closely related to the value the state places on the individual. When different ethnic, religious, cultural, or socio-economic groups within society perceive themselves as equal citizens, their bond with the state is strengthened. However, if any group feels systematically excluded, ignored, or othered, over time they develop a distant attitude toward the state. This weakens the foundation of loyalty. Therefore, loyalty to the state is directly related to the state's inclusiveness. In the modern world, the relationship between the state and society has become more diverse and complex. Especially with the influence of globalization,

digitalization, and individualization, people no longer define the state solely by physical borders or traditional symbols. Factors such as the quality of the state's digital services, transparency in access to information, and crisis management capabilities have become new determinants of loyalty. For example, during the pandemic, some states' failure to support their citizens, the inadequacy of healthcare systems, or the inability to manage misinformation led to a loss of trust and loyalty among many individuals. On the other hand, states that acted transparently, fairly, and inclusively during crises gained greater respect in the eyes of their citizens and strengthened bonds of loyalty.

Symbols, rituals, and collective memory also play an important role in society's loyalty to the state. Flags, national anthems, national holidays, commemorations, and shared heroes help keep emotional bonds with the state alive. The shared memory formed around these symbols enables individuals to see themselves as part of a larger whole. However, when these symbols become hollow or insincere, they turn into mere spectacle and fail to achieve the desired effect. That's why the state must support such symbols not only with ceremonies but also with genuine policies.

Loyalty is not merely an emotional attachment but a mutual contract. While the state says to its citizen, "I will protect you, uphold your rights, and be just," the citizen, in turn, says, "I will abide by the rules, support my state, and fulfill my responsibilities." When either party violates this silent contract, cracks begin to form in the relationship. Younger generations are especially sensitive to such breaches. As they have easier access to information and are more closely connected to the world, they respond to injustice or inequality more quickly and openly. For the state to cope with this dynamic, it must act not only within the framework of laws but also with sincerity, justice, and transparency.

Loyalty is not achieved merely through the size or power of the state. Sometimes, a small but fair intervention can lay the foundation for long-lasting trust. For example, in times of disaster, when the state arrives promptly, extends a helping hand, listens to the people, and responds to their needs, it strengthens the bond between the state and the affected community. Likewise, building a school, a health center, or a road in a small village can make the residents feel valued. A state's ability to say to every citizen, "You matter," is the strongest foundation of loyalty. On the other hand, extreme glorification of the state among some segments of society can lead to unhealthy forms of loyalty. Blind allegiance weakens the culture of critique and distances those in power from accountability. True loyalty is critical loyalty—being both committed and questioning. A loyal citizen is one who sees the mistakes of the state, voices concerns, and offers constructive suggestions. Blind loyalty eventually covers up the state's flaws and leads to social decay. Therefore, loyalty must go hand in hand with a conscious sense of citizenship.

Society's loyalty to the state has consequences not only domestically but also in foreign policy. A society that maintains a strong bond with its state is more resilient to external threats. A united front in the face of foreign pressure strengthens the state's position. In this sense, the loyalty of society contributes directly to national independence and sovereignty. A strong state internally paves the way for respect and credibility abroad. Thus, achieving internal unity is of vital importance not only for social peace but also for national security.

In conclusion, society's loyalty to the state is a long-term, multi-faceted, and reciprocal relationship.

This loyalty is not formed overnight; it is built over time. The justice, equality, service quality, and sincerity shown by the state determine the people's trust. Similarly, citizens' sense of responsibility, informed engagement, and critical loyalty form the other side of the equation. A strong state is not only one with strong institutions but also one with a loyal, engaged, and conscious society. And this loyalty is not tested solely in a flag ceremony or at the ballot box. True loyalty is revealed in everyday life, during crises, and in the face of injustice. That is where the real bond is tested, strengthened—or broken.





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