

In this edition of *Türkiye in Focus*:

- MHP leader calls for the establishment of a parliamentary commission on the initiative for a terror-free Türkiye.
- Statements regarding the Lausanne Treaty and the 1924 Constitution in the PKK’s dissolution declaration have sparked controversy.
- Türkiye’s efforts to ensure energy security continue. A major natural gas reserve has been discovered in the Black Sea.

Bahçeli Proposes All-Party Commission Regarding the Terror-Free Türkiye Initiative

Following the PKK’s decision to disarm and dissolve, attention has turned to two key points. First, the implementation of this decision is awaited. The technical details have yet to be shared with the public. Rumours suggest that the weapons will be handed over at designated points in Northern Iraq. However, this new situation also necessitates various legal and administrative arrangements within Türkiye. Experts and political actors alike emphasise that these arrangements must be made through social consensus.

In this context, MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli proposed the formation of a 100-member commission encompassing all 16 parties represented in Parliament. The idea of including even those parties with only one MP and the suggestion of such a large commission can be interpreted as an effort to involve all segments of society in the process.

Following Bahçeli’s remarks, Speaker of Parliament Numan Kurtulmuş expressed support for the idea, stating that “Parliament is the place where this matter should be discussed.” However, both AK Party officials and the Speaker have indicated that such a commission would be established after the disarmament process is complete. This stage may take a few months, and the commission proposal is expected to return to the agenda with the opening of the new parliamentary term in October.



(Emin Sansar - Anadolu Agency)

Parliamentary activity continues in the meantime. The İmralı delegation of the DEM Party has begun visiting political parties this week to share information following its recent visit to the island. These visits have been a recurring practice since the early stages of the process. Meanwhile, there are claims that some provisions in the new judicial reform package could be submitted to Parliament and passed within two weeks. If this happens, it could lead to the release of some elderly and ill prisoners—an outcome that could positively influence both the disarmament process and the broader political atmosphere.

Debate Over Lausanne Treaty

The Lausanne Treaty, signed with relevant states—primarily the United Kingdom—after the National Independence War and the 1924 Constitution, the first constitution adopted after the proclamation of the Republic, were both criticised in the PKK’s disbandment declaration. This prompted some factions within the opposition to initiate a debate on the subject.

Among secular nationalist and Kemalist circles associated with the CHP, the Lausanne Treaty is often regarded as Türkiye’s “foundational document.” While this view is not universally shared across the political spectrum, it is understandable, as the treaty marked the formal recognition of the Republic of Türkiye by the international community.

The 1924 Constitution, in contrast to the 1921 Constitution, strengthened central authority and introduced an explicit definition of Turkish citizenship. However, many changes have since been made. For instance, the clause stating “The religion of the state is Islam” was later removed.

Similarly, claims that the Lausanne Treaty protected Türkiye’s national borders are not fully consistent with historical facts. A notable example is the incorporation of Hatay into Türkiye

through a referendum—a development that occurred well after Lausanne.

The fact that a group with a secessionist agenda criticised these foundational documents understandably provoked national sensitivities. Nonetheless, such debates are tangential to the central issue of the PKK’s disarmament and dissolution.

MHP leader Bahçeli addressed this matter in a televised statement, saying: “In order to achieve peace and a terror-free Türkiye, we must wait patiently and avoid unnecessary debates on unrelated topics.”

As the conflict that has affected Türkiye on multiple fronts for nearly five decades comes to a close, and at a time when democratic civil politics are set to be strengthened, it is crucial for opposition parties to engage constructively.

Debates like the one over the Lausanne Treaty often fuel emotional manipulation, diverting attention from the peace process and providing few solutions to current challenges. While this particular discussion seems to have had little impact on the peace process, Türkiye’s democratic public sphere is likely to face similar challenges in the future.

New Natural Gas Reserve Discovered in the Black Sea



(Raşit Aydoğan - Anadolu Agency)

Unlike its neighbours, Türkiye has historically had limited reserves of oil and natural gas. This geographic reality has influenced internal efforts to overcome this shortfall and various political crises since the founding of the Republic. Many Turkish historians argue that one of the key reasons Mosul—rich in oil resources—was not handed to Türkiye a century ago during the post-Ottoman reordering was its strategic energy importance.

As a result, Türkiye has long been heavily dependent on energy imports to support its industrial growth. Energy dependency

has remained one of the biggest structural weaknesses of the Turkish economy. However, recent years have seen significant investments in energy exploration and production, and these efforts are beginning to bear fruit.

The discovery of large oil fields in the Gabar Mountains of Şırnak is a prime example. Production in this area has steadily increased, reaching 80,000 barrels per day as of March—more than doubling compared to the previous year. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Alparslan Bayraktar recently announced the discovery of an additional 41 million barrels of reserves in the Gabar region.

Türkiye’s exploration and production efforts are not limited to land. Offshore projects have also gained momentum, especially since the Fatih drilling ship was launched in 2018. Most recently, a significant discovery was made in the Black Sea last week, estimated to hold 75 billion cubic meters of natural gas.

These efforts are beginning to yield tangible results. Türkiye’s energy imports decreased by 5.1% in 2024 compared to the previous year. This not only strengthens the country’s energy security but also enhances its political and economic power.

Highlights

- A third wave of operations was carried out as part of the corruption investigation targeting the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Twenty individuals were taken into custody during the operation.
- The 161st anniversary of the Circassian Exile was commemorated, with many, including President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, sharing messages to mark the occasion, particularly directed at the Circassian community, many of whom settled in Türkiye as a result of the exile.
- President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that he may visit the United States for in-person meetings with President Donald Trump. Speaking to journalists upon his return from Hungary, Erdoğan discussed Türkiye’s expanding international influence and outlined ongoing efforts to address Syria’s complex security issues, including the future of the YPG terror group and Daesh detainees.

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