

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*:

- The parliamentary commission has begun its work within the framework of the Terror-Free Türkiye process.
- Researcher Mehmet Kılıç explored the ramifications of the peace treaty signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia.
- E-signature Forgery and Fake Diploma Scandals Dominate National Headlines

National Unity, Brotherhood, and Democracy Commission Begins Parliamentary Work as Attention Turns to Developments in Syria



(TBMM - Anadolu Agency)

The recent "Terror-Free Türkiye Process" has entered an active phase in parliament, with all represented political parties except the Good (İYİ) Party taking part in a newly formed commission. In its inaugural session, the body officially adopted the name *National Unity, Brotherhood, and Democracy Commission*. The second meeting was marked by a unanimous decision - supported by both government and opposition members - to conduct the National Intelligence Organisation's presentation under confidentiality rules. This consensus indicates a shared awareness of the process's sensitivity and a constructive approach, even as segments of the opposition's grassroots remain critical of their parties' participation. While some may see the secrecy decision as inconsistent with opposition rhetoric on transparency, it also underscores recognition across the political spectrum of the extraordinary nature of the meeting's content.

The issues on the commission's agenda cut to the core of Türkiye's long-standing structural challenges, particularly the Kurdish question and the problem of violence, matters deeply intertwined with broader political, social, and security dynamics. Although the ultimate mandate of the commission is widely acknowledged to be limited, the discussions are

poised to touch on fundamental aspects of Turkish politics, warranting close observation. The process is also becoming a platform for political parties to introduce their priorities and strategic narratives into a broader national conversation.

At the third session, party proposals revealed distinct political approaches. The ruling AK Party emphasised the need to draw on international models to design a new solution that reflects a Turkish model in peace-making. The MHP proposed a comprehensive reform of the penal code's execution provisions, advocating for a broad legal framework that could benefit various categories of inmates, extending beyond the political dimension of the process. The DEM Party reiterated its call for transparency and the inclusion of Kurdish citizens and left-leaning civil society actors. Meanwhile, the CHP sought to balance and represent the oft-diverging demands of its traditional social democratic and nationalist base.

A parallel track of the "Terror-Free Türkiye" process involves regional security, most notably the stability and territorial integrity of Syria. In this context, recent weeks have seen intensified diplomatic engagement between Ankara and Damascus. This week, the Syrian intelligence chief, defence minister, and foreign minister visited Türkiye. Such contacts suggest a recognition on both sides that regional stability is closely linked to the domestic security agenda in Türkiye.

Following his meeting with Syria's Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan publicly criticised the YPG's unwillingness to reconcile with Damascus, labelling it "spoiler behaviour" and urging adaptation to the new regional realities. Fidan stressed that Türkiye's priority remains a peaceful resolution but that it is prepared to respond to any potential security threats. On the defence front, talks between Turkish and Syrian officials culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Joint Training and Consultancy between the two countries' defence ministries, an indication that security cooperation is becoming an institutionalised component of the new diplomatic climate.

Zengezur Corridor as a Pathway to Economic Growth and Cooperation

Researcher Mehmet Kılıç evaluated the agreement reached between Azerbaijan and Armenia and its implications for Türkiye.

The decades-old conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia came to an end with the signing of a joint declaration on a peace roadmap following negotiations hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump last week. Representing one of the most concrete steps in advancing the peace process between the two countries, the agreement not only signals the beginning of a new era for building lasting stability in the South Caucasus but also includes provisions for the opening of the Zengezur Corridor, a strategic route aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and economic integration.

The Zengezur Corridor is a strategic transportation and trade corridor linking mainland Azerbaijan to the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through Armenia's Syunik province with both rail and road connections. The corridor became a significant route for regional trade, energy transport, and connectivity after the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War.

Türkiye has deployed significant diplomatic and strategic efforts to open the corridor, which on August 8, 2025, reached a landmark as Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan signed a declaration of opening it up for use. Ankara played a key role in maintaining communication channels open, building confidence between the two sides, and relentlessly encouraging both Azerbaijan and Armenia to achieve sustainable peace.

The agreement is aimed at establishing trade, transport and energy ties in the region, increasing economic cooperation and regional integration. To Türkiye, the corridor is not only an economic interest but also a connectivity route of utmost geostrategic importance. The opening of the corridor will revitalise trade corridors by directly connecting Türkiye to Central Asia and Azerbaijan, expand energy streams, and boost integration with the Turkic world.

After the agreement, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan conveyed his satisfaction with the deal over the phone to Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev and emphasised that long-term stability and peace would be to the benefit of the entire region. Also, Erdoğan mentioned that Türkiye would continue to provide support for that purpose. Similarly, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan described the agreement as 'an important development' when he held a joint press conference with his Egyptian counterpart on August 9, 2025, adding that the corridor would 'link Europe to the depths of Asia via Türkiye' and that this was 'a very favourable development.'

Communications Director Burhanettin Duran, in his statement on the X platform, welcomed the agreement as a 'truly remarkable development' that promises a new era of peace and prosperity in the region. He emphasised that under



(Azerbaijan Presidency - Anadolu Agency)

President Erdoğan's leadership, Türkiye will continue to engage in diplomacy, support constructive initiatives, and maintain close contact with the parties to ensure regional stability.

It must be noted that the advancement of the Zengezur Corridor is unlikely to undermine the geostrategic location of Georgia. Türkiye, Azerbaijan, and Georgia maintain a deeply rooted strategic partnership reinforced by decades of political, economic, and security cooperation. Ankara, Baku, and Tbilisi have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to regional peace through established trilateral mechanisms—such as the Türkiye–Georgia–Azerbaijan framework—which foster dialogue, infrastructure development, and coordinated security policies. The recent 12 August 2025 meeting between President Erdoğan and President Kavelashvili underscored that these channels remain active and mutually beneficial, with both leaders reaffirming their intent to strengthen collaboration on pressing regional challenges.

In this context, the Zengezur Corridor should be viewed not as a rival to Georgia's role, but as a complementary initiative within a broader regional connectivity agenda—one that can coexist with, and even reinforce, the trilateral cooperation formats that continue to anchor Türkiye–Georgia relations in stability and shared strategic interests.

Thus, the Zengezur Corridor represents a historic opportunity to cement the South Caucasus region into a centre of economic growth, energy security, and Turkic integration. Its success will depend on continued political will, concerted coordination, and wise management of regional dynamics. If the latter are managed well, the corridor can both be an economic lifeline and a stable underpinning for lasting peace.

It is important to highlight that soon after the agreement, Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan made a call to President Erdoğan, demonstrating the desire for friendly discourse. All these can also work to accelerate the ongoing process of normalisation between Armenia and Türkiye, ushering in a new era in the bilateral ties.

Fake Diploma Scandal Sparks Nationwide Reaction

Türkiye's recent e-signature forgery case has attracted significant public attention, serving as a reminder that even well-functioning and rapidly developing digital governance systems require constant vigilance and improvement. Involving 199 defendants accused of producing forged diplomas and drivers' licenses using falsified electronic signatures, the case has acted as a practical test of Türkiye's e-government mechanisms. Official findings confirmed 57 fraudulent university diplomas, four high school diplomas, and 108 driver's licenses, figures notably lower than those circulated in early media reports. The Directorate of Communications' Centre for Combating Disinformation addressed public concern by affirming that these official numbers reflect the actual scope of the breach.

Rather than casting doubt on Türkiye's digital progress, the incident underscores the importance of maintaining and upgrading security measures alongside service expansion. Authorities have responded with both legal action against those involved and technical measures to strengthen system



(Mustafa Çiftçi - Anadolu Agency)

safeguards. As digitalisation continues to transform public services, the lessons from this case can inform more robust authentication processes, enhanced monitoring, and broader public awareness, helping ensure that trust in digital systems keeps pace with their growth.

Highlights

- A 6.1-magnitude earthquake in Balıkesir, in western Türkiye, left one person dead and 29 injured.
- At the Supreme Military Council meeting chaired by President Erdoğan, Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu was appointed as the new Chief of General Staff.
- Türkiye is boosting emergency preparedness by converting large public parks into disaster-ready hubs. Under new regulations from the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change, parks of at least 5,000 m² will be equipped with underground sewage, mechanical and electrical systems, and communication networks to serve as safe gathering and living areas after major disasters.

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