

In this week's *Türkiye in Focus*;

- Ten years after the 15 July coup attempt, Türkiye's fight against FETÖ continues.
- An investigation has been launched into famous Turkish rock star Haluk Levent and his charity, the AHBAP Association.
- The investigation into Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu's death, one of Türkiye's most enduring unsolved political cases, has been reopened.

A Decade Since 15 July: Türkiye's Ongoing Battle with FETÖ

A decade has passed since the seismic events of the 15 July coup attempt, a defining event in Türkiye's modern history now officially commemorated as Democracy and National Unity Day. Each year, citizens across the country gather to honour those who risked their lives to defend democratic institutions against a violent takeover. The immediate political aftermath of the failed putsch catalysed a structural overhaul of the state, most notably driving the transition to the presidential system. While President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's personal charisma and critical broadcast call to the streets were pivotal in thwarting the plot on the night, the subsequent constitutional shift aimed to institutionalise this defensive capacity, centralising governance to ensure rapid decision-making and prevent future infiltration of state institutions. Over the past ten years, this system has overseen an extensive purge and restructuring process to dismantle the influence of the Fetullah Gülen Terror Organisation (FETÖ) within the bureaucracy.

The coup attempt also initiated a prolonged period of friction between Ankara and its Western allies. Many Western nations struggled to comprehend the network's clandestine nature, with some granting asylum to its members. Exploiting this situation, the group has continued to run sophisticated lobbying and disinformation campaigns against Türkiye from abroad—a front that remains one of Ankara's most sensitive foreign policy challenges.

Addressing the public on this landmark tenth anniversary, President Erdoğan highlighted a significant shift within the organisation, noting that internal questioning and fragmentation have surged following the death of its leader,



(Murat Kula - Anadolu Agency)

Fetullah Gülen. This assessment follows a recent, highly publicised statement by a breakaway faction that expressed self-criticism and declared renewed allegiance to Türkiye, suggesting a potential erosion of the group's internal cohesion.

Nevertheless, the Turkish leadership remains acutely aware of the group's historical adaptability. Erdoğan quickly paired his observations on the group's internal decline with a stark warning about its deceptive nature, reminding the public of FETÖ's long-standing strategy of operating under dual identities and embedding its members within various social and political guises. In the past, Türkiye paid a heavy price for underestimating their duplicity. Today, the state remains alert, with security operations continuing across the country. Coordinated raids last week led to 968 detentions, reflecting the sustained intensity of these efforts.

Charity Scandal Rocks Turkish Musician

Haluk Levent, a veteran of Türkiye's rock scene, has undergone an unusual reputational revival. Once associated as much with financial troubles and a well-publicised gambling habit as with his music, he began recasting his public image in 2017 through direct engagement on social media and the creation of the AHBAP Association. The shift proved effective. By the time of the 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes, AHBAP had become one of the country's most visible and best-funded relief organisations, cementing Levent's transformation from troubled celebrity to trusted figure in grassroots philanthropy.

That carefully cultivated image has come under significant pressure following recent legal developments. This week, Levent was detained alongside 14 others as part of an



(Emin Tezerdi - Anadolu Agency)

investigation into allegations that donations made to AHBAP were misappropriated for personal use. Prosecutors are also examining potential links to a broader illegal betting network. Justice Minister Yılmaz Tunç said Levent was detained after authorities received intelligence suggesting he might attempt to leave the country. A court subsequently ordered his pre-trial detention, a decision that has intensified scrutiny of both Levent and the governance of one of Türkiye's most prominent charitable organisations.

The scandal has also reignited deeper socio-political debates within Türkiye. Those debates were already active during the aftermath of the 2023 disaster, when AHBAP was heavily championed, particularly by opposition circles, in a manner that occasionally contrasted its efficiency with that of state institutions, thereby amplifying discussions surrounding institutional trust. In the wake of the current criminal investigation and subsequent arrests, the public sphere is witnessing a swift recalibration. Many high-profile figures and social media users who once enthusiastically promoted the charity are now issuing public apologies, reflecting a growing sense of disillusionment among those who had rallied behind Levent as a symbol of civil solidarity.

Yazıcıoğlu Investigation: Detentions Reignite Assassination Suspicions

The tragic death of Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, the leader of the Great Unity Party (BBP), who lost his life alongside five others in a helicopter crash in 2009, has remained one of Türkiye's most enduring public mysteries. Yazıcıoğlu was a political figure whose appeal stretched far beyond his party's modest electoral share; he was widely respected across the political spectrum. However, he was also a highly influential and complex figure, possessing deep-rooted connections within the state apparatus dating back to the violent left-right clashes of the 1970s and the intricate power networks of the 1990s. From the very beginning, the public and commentators alike viewed the crash not merely as a tragic accident, but as a highly suspicious event wrapped in political intrigue.

The decades-old case has been thrust back into the spotlight this week following a major wave of detentions targeting 27 individuals, predominantly former military and police personnel. Several were already serving prison sentences for convictions related to the Fetullah Gülen Terror Organisation (FETÖ), prompting renewed scrutiny of longstanding allegations that the helicopter crash could have been a targeted FETÖ assassination. The crash took place as the terror organisation was expanding its grip on state institutions and moving to eliminate figures deemed hostile to its clandestine aims.



(Kenan Çimen - Anadolu Agency)

The renewed momentum behind the investigation also coincides with the priorities of Türkiye's recently appointed Justice Minister, Akın Gürlek, who has signalled a willingness to revisit unresolved high-profile cases and suspicious deaths from the country's recent past. In that context, the Yazıcıoğlu case carries particular political weight, given the late politician's prominence and his close familiarity with the workings of the state. As the investigation progresses, attention is likely to focus not only on the circumstances surrounding the crash but also on whether the proceedings shed new light on longstanding questions about institutional accountability and historical networks of influence.

Highlights

- President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid a visit to Doha to express his respects and condolences over the death of the former Qatari Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.
- Speaking at a joint press conference in Kyiv with his Ukrainian counterpart, Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan emphasised the importance of Black Sea security and suggested that returning to the Istanbul talks would be beneficial.
- For the first time since the Syrian civil war, Turkish naval vessels have docked at Syria's Latakia Port.

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