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*Secularism, the mullahs and imperialist aggression*



# Imperialist aggression and the revolutionary stance



империализм—это агрессия!

# ***Secularism, the mullahs and imperialist aggression***

**Kemal Okuyan** - *TKP General Secretary*



The claim that secularism is an “elitist project” is pure fabrication.

The word itself comes from the people. Its roots lie in the Greek term for “the people,” originally used to describe those outside the clergy. The clergy, of course, form a privileged stratum and, if one insists on using this concept, yes, they are elite.

The real problem lies in the theory of “elitism,” which explains very little. If the term “elite” refers to ruling, privileged groups, then secularism in the world and in Turkey emerged in opposition to those elites.

We should also remember that centuries ago in Anatolia, people's belief systems were reshaped through massacres by sword. Over time that transformation stabilized and produced its own conservatism. Yet it also generated resistance. These movements were rooted in the people and were anything but elitist. At the very least, a culture of resistance emerged.

A brief apology to the reader for reference to the concept of "elitism". "Elitism" is a vague and largely useless concept, and building a political discussion around it carries risks. But since those who harbor an allergy to the Republic have placed it at our doorstep, we must pick it up for a while just to throw it back.

The abolition of the sultanate and the caliphate struck a decisive blow against a political and social order, in which class and bureaucratic forces clustered around the Ottoman palace, while tribal chiefs, religious order sheikhs, large landowners and parasitic tax farmers thrived in the provinces. If we are going to debate elitism, the critics of the Republic will not come out well. Yes, some sections of land-proprietor owners supported the proclamation of the Republic because it

served their interests. But within the Ankara government their influence largely pushed for reforming the monarchy rather than abolishing it. It was the “elites” who resisted going further.

The proclamation of the Republic and the abolition of the caliphate were Jacobin acts and thoroughly popular interventions.

There is nothing “popular” about the reactions against the reforms of the Republic in Turkey. In regions where reactionary ideologies gained ground among the poor peasantry, large sections of the population were dragged into this backwardness by those who refused to treat people as equals and saw their transformation into citizens as a threat. Without lifting that pressure, a popular awakening was impossible. What they attacked as elitism was the possibility of the people’s enlightenment.

The Republic opened the path to citizenship. But as long as class domination remained intact, reactionary ideologies found ample room to flourish. As the capitalist class grew stronger, it blamed popular poverty on the Republic itself, presenting secularism as something imposed from above and alien to Anatolia.

For decades the Turkish bourgeoisie turned secularism into a prop for pro-NATO and pro-American politics, while exploiting the powerful legitimacy of the War of Independence for its own rule. During this period reactionary forces worked both to strengthen their position within the ruling bloc and to convince the poor that all their problems stemmed from the secular Republic.

The rise of the AKP created major fractures within the state and the internal balance of the system. Yet from the standpoint of the capitalist class, the upheaval was far less dramatic. TÜSİAD capital did not lose its dominant position. On the contrary, it made enormous profits and, however reluctantly, accepted the rise of new capital groups that expected to gain space through the AKP. In the end they all benefited.

Despite this, the AKP successfully marketed itself as the movement of the oppressed. It reinterpreted secularism as it pleased and continued to portray the transformations of the Republican era as elitist and alien to the people under the label of “militant secularism.”

In this way some of the most aggressively pro-market and anti-people policies in our history were presented as the revolution of Anatolia's conservative poor. The intellectual weakness of the right was conveniently supplemented by liberals and by a segment of the so-called left.

This entire narrative must be rejected. One reason it seemed convincing was the belief that religious politics in the Islamic world stands outside capitalism. In reality Islam is perfectly compatible with capital accumulation and often normalizes inequality more effectively than earlier religious systems. Because this was not understood, political Islam was treated as something external to capitalism and many believed Turkey's reactionary forces would lose momentum once integrated into the system. This view, which also rested on the strange assumption that capitalism itself is progressive, has been thoroughly disproved by the AKP experience.

Secularism can no longer be defended as a modernization project. Today it must be understood as a direct struggle for enlightenment rooted in class politics.

From here we can turn to Iran.

Under very different social conditions, on a different sectarian basis and shaped by different dynamics, the religious movement that came to dominate Iran also cleared its path by positioning itself against the decaying modernity of the Shah's regime, advancing populist claims and deploying the familiar critique of elitism.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution emerged from an unspoken alliance between a working class where communists held significant influence and the small and medium-sized proprietors of the Bazaar, an important economic and cultural force largely aligned with the religious movement. This alliance generated the energy that mobilized rural and urban poor, intellectuals and students alike.

As the mullahs consolidated their influence within this revolutionary wave, they stole the revolution from the working class and turned it into a counterrevolution. In doing so they also had to shake up and partially dismantle the existing ruling class bloc. The Islamist movement led by Khomeini came to power on the back of widespread hatred for the Shah and the system he represented. Though

not revolutionary itself, it was compelled to carry out radical transformations. Those advocating a softer transition were eliminated and sweeping nationalizations dismantled much of the old capitalist class.

At the same time a ruthless campaign of repression was launched against communists and other progressive forces. The injustices of the Shah's era were blamed on secularism, and the new theocratic order was presented as an anti-elitist and egalitarian popular awakening.

Unlike the gradual continuity seen in Turkey, Iran experienced a sharp rupture that reshaped its ruling class structure from top to bottom. The clerical establishment built a capitalist system designed to withstand pressure from below. Workers' rights were rolled back and almost no space remained for class struggle. Much of the state sector was transferred to the clerical hierarchy through bonyads and similar foundations, while the managers of key institutions themselves became capitalists. A new exploiting class emerged, hiding behind the modest image of "a robe and a turban."

These contradictions have now culminated

in a new and comprehensive wave of aggression against Iran. US imperialism and Zionist Israel are not merely targeting the Iranian government. They are attacking the Iranian people's right to fight this reactionary dictatorship on their own terms. They are attacking Iran's resources, its history, its culture, its borders and its sovereignty. The internal class realities described above have nothing to do with this assault.

If this aggression succeeds, Iran will not be liberated. Instead it will simply be stripped of the features that make it "problematic" for US imperialism. The region will be reshaped according to US-Israeli plans, Turkey will be pushed into full alignment with that agenda, and perhaps even face an existential test. Worse still, imperialist powers will begin to believe they can redesign any country at will.

This is an extremely dangerous process.

We know what the Iranian people have endured for years. The secularism we defend in Turkey is not irrelevant for Iran. On the contrary; Iran needs secularism and, beyond that, a government of working people.



But imperialist aggression must be defeated. This responsibility cannot be diluted with arguments about the mullahs. Anyone who wishes to shape Iran's future must focus on resisting this aggression. It is entirely possible to do so without propping up the reactionary government. While some Iranian forces have chosen the path of imperialist collaboration, it is encouraging that others defend an independent anti-imperialist line. Ultimately the future of Iran will be decided by the Iranian people themselves.

Despite being neighbours, we are still on the outside looking in when it comes to Iran's internal struggles. Our responsibility is to help stop foreign intervention and aggression

against Iran. In this context we do not deny the Iranian government's right to defend the country against attack, and we stand with the resistance shown against the aggressors in the name of the Iranian people.

This is the revolutionary position. Saying "I oppose both the United States and the regime in Iran" today effectively gives a green light to US and Israeli aggression. Revolutionaries must understand where the initiative lies and carefully assess how these developments will affect the oppressed of the region and the world. Positions that may appear creative or leftist at first glance often prove to have no real value in practice.



## **TKP's call to part ways**

**Cansu Oba,**

*Member of TKP Central Committee*

On February 16, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) released a public statement titled "Time to Part Ways." The statement – also published in English on the TKP website – attracted attention, particularly at a moment when both right-wing and various "left" political circles in Turkey were emphasizing "unity and togetherness".

So, with whom was TKP proposing to part ways? Where did this call for separation originate?

The answer was stated explicitly in the text: TKP

declared that the time had come to part ways with the Turkish bourgeoisie.

Yet from the standpoint of a communist party committed to working-class politics, why articulate something that might appear self-evident?

Because it has become necessary to restate a fundamental point: the root of the problems confronting Turkey today lies in the labor–capital contradiction. It can reasonably be argued that the principal actors of bourgeois politics obscure this structural reality, and that sections of the “left,” through their political positioning, contribute to that obscuration.

Turkey is experiencing severe poverty and a deepening cost of living crisis. Hunger and homelessness have, for some time, become chronic social conditions. The underlying cause, from this perspective, is the rule of capital and the system of exploitation. However, while the labor–capital contradiction is more readily acknowledged in direct economic matters — such as impoverishment, intensified exploitation, and violations of workplace rights — it tends to be set aside once political questions extend beyond the economic sphere. Issues of vital political importance for working people are

then explained as if they were independent of the capitalist system and governed by separate dynamics.

Such an approach overlooks the coherence necessary for the working class to assert itself as a decisive political force.

Politics is treated as though it were divided into distinct compartments, each governed by different rules: when exploitation is discussed, the framework becomes labor versus capital; when the Kurdish question is discussed, the framework shifts to freedom versus authoritarianism; when secularism is discussed, it becomes progressivism versus reactionism. This compartmentalization confines the labor-capital contradiction to a limited domain, places it alongside other contradictions as merely one issue among many, and renders the systemic roots of social problems less visible. From this standpoint, it represents a significant distortion.

The consequences are twofold. First, working people are pushed into a passive position with regard to political developments that directly affect their lives. Second, even economic struggles lose strategic depth and political coherence when severed from a broader systemic analysis.

In this context, TKP's statement constitutes a challenge to the dominant political framework in Turkey. It asserts that the labor question lies at the core of the country's major problems — without trivializing other political issues and without reducing the labor–capital contradiction narrowly to the realm of workers' rights.

The statement presents the so-called “peace process” as aligned with a neo-Ottoman regional agenda, new intra-system alliances, and a broader “American peace” project — and therefore as part of the labor issue itself. The hostility toward the Republic accompanying this process is framed as a labor issue itself. The increasing Islamization of domestic politics is likewise framed as a labor issue itself.

From this perspective, the “parting of ways” also refers to the broader division imposed on working people of Turkey in conjunction with the “peace process”. While narratives of a “Strong Turkey” are promoted, our argument holds that the primary beneficiary is Turkish capital. The future being advanced for Turkey's working class — including Kurdish workers — with the neo-Ottomanist project is characterized by intensified exploitation, deregulation, reactionism, and the threat of war.

The central question, then, is clear: will we part ways with this future proposed by the “peace process”?

On one side stands a process supported collectively by the bourgeoisie, despite their internal rivalries and disputes. On the other stands the prospect of a future to be built through the struggle of working people for equality, independence, republicanism, and secularism. According to this analysis, no third path exists between these two trajectories. This does not imply that the resolution process will proceed without disruption; however, given regional and domestic dynamics, any derailment from now on would also carry serious consequences for the working people.

In this sense, TKP’s “parting ways” statement seeks to instill confidence and resolve among the working people. To part ways with the Turkish bourgeoisie is not simply to mark a political disagreement; it is to reject the idea of a shared political “homeland” in which capital and labor are presumed to have common interests. It is to assert that the country cannot simultaneously serve as a common house for exploiters and the exploited. The working class has no alternative homeland to retreat to; its fate is inseparable from the future of the

country itself. Capital, by contrast, is inherently mobile and unbound – its loyalties follow profit rather than place. It is capital that is rootless.

Besides, the position in the statement entails more than opposition. It requires that working people intervene in the political sphere with their own comprehensive social and political project. Working-class politics must lay claim to Turkey's future as a whole and articulate a coherent program addressing all major political questions. We maintain that strengthening the ties between Kurdish workers who feel little enthusiasm for the "peace process" and the country itself is possible only through such a labor-centered political approach.

For this claim to gain traction, it was necessary to clarify once again with whom – and on what basis – we are parting ways. TKP's statement responds to that necessity: as a declaration, it calls upon all segments of the working people, as well as intellectuals aligned with the working class, to take a clear and unequivocal stand.





## **Has the fight against NATO lost its priority?**

**Ayhan Keser,**

*Member of TKP Party Council*

*Considering that Trump's second term has been marked by imperialist aggression that defies even his own rules, is NATO losing its pivotal role in the imperialist agenda as well as the anti-imperialist struggle?*

Although NATO's expansion efforts seem to have triggered the Ukraine-Russia war, is NATO now a less significant organization?

Given that Trump has launched military operations and attacks in many different regions of the world one after another without much regard for NATO's umbrella, is NATO losing its priority in the communists' struggle?

Does the US's attempt to shake and alter the current positions of all major international actors, including China, Russia, the European Union, and NATO itself, albeit to varying intensities, require a focus on the internal contradictions of the imperialist-capitalist system rather than broad opposition to NATO, especially considering the disorganization of the working class?

The growing competition and tensions within the imperialist system—even within the same camp—are giving rise to these questions.

### **Why does the US push its "allies"?**

This could certainly be discussed using many other examples, but let's start our assessment with the Munich Security Summit held in 2025. Throughout the summit, US Vice President JD Vance accused the European imperialists of not being competent, not trusting their own people, panic-stricken like children in the face of major global upheavals, and most importantly, not

spending enough on security and expecting the US to protect them.

Shocked by the arrogance they had displayed towards the whole world now turning against them, European imperialists debated the steps they needed to take to respond to the US while also guaranteeing their “own security.” According to the claim, Europe needed “a new security architecture.”

However, these debates offered nothing but further militarization, a more aggressive stance in the international arena, and the manipulation of the European working class through war-mongering propaganda.

The 2026 Munich Conference, held with the title Under Destruction, reinforced this approach by pointing to the total destruction of the entire international system.

While discussions about destruction and its aftermath continued, if the old was to be destroyed, it was necessary to first take up arms in order to build the new.

Just as the question “Is NATO no longer necessary?” quickly became irrelevant shortly after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, there

is no valid reason for NATO to have lost its importance today. NATO is precisely the most powerful weapon they have to do what they need to do today. However, this weapon must also be overhauled and, if necessary, modified.

The US sees that developments in the “normal” functioning of the current international toolkit are paving the way for China and is shaking things up. But China is only one issue to consider. The imperialist capitalist system entirely aims to erase all the consequences of the first and second world wars. And they don't have a command and attack hub more powerful than NATO to achieve this goal.

### **Are contradictions insignificant?**

However, the imperialist-capitalist system does not always move in a way that allows the hegemonic power to completely determine the others. The United States continues to remain at the top because it still possesses the capacity to generate a momentum that overcomes tensions within the imperialist system. As a result of its political, ideological, military power and the ability to form and dissolve alliances, The United States still holds the hegemonic position.



It can be said that US hegemony has been damaged and that different imperialist centers are even seeking to weigh up alliance systems and seize new opportunities. However, this does not indicate a certain change in hegemony where everything will be re-evaluated from scratch, but only points to the erosion of US hegemony and the need for a renewal.

Even this much is, of course, very important. It is precisely for this reason that Trump's moves, which have been coming to light for several years now, are not the result of a madman's whims, but rather the product of US imperialism's search for a way out.

Those who expect US imperialism to act in a more peaceful way, or who hope that European resistance can rein in the US, have failed to understand the nature of imperialism. At its core, imperialism is about "intervention." Intervention

everywhere, under any circumstances, and constantly, for the sake of its own class interests.

In this sense, those who are “shocked” by the harshness of Trump’s actions are themselves following the same strategy. It suffices to look at the stance of European imperialists in the war in Ukraine and their support for the Zelensky regime. European imperialists are doing everything in their power to prolong the war with all kinds of economic and military support.

Therefore, the rivalry and contradictions between imperialists should be viewed as a set of processes that must be constantly monitored and intervened in at every opportunity. However, the intervention we refer to is not possible by establishing strategies subject to these contradictions, but by building an independent revolutionary class line. The shadow of internal system competition falling over this line can only result in distracting the working class with false dreams.

## **Priority of fighting against NATO**

In a world where everything is being torn apart, we must determine the main priorities of our struggle against the imperialist system.

What is taking place in Syria and Palestine, the “peace process” in Turkey, and now the aggression directed against Iran are pushing the claim of an “American peace” that the United States has been attempting to build in the Middle East for some time into a new phase. It is impossible not to see that NATO accompanies this project. Indeed, the recent incident involving a missile fired from Iran and intercepted by NATO air defense systems—allegedly because it was heading toward Turkish airspace—once again revealed NATO’s role. Although there was no evidence that the missile actually targeted Turkey, and later denied by Iran itself, NATO issued a provocative condemnation accusing Iran of targeting Turkey. This continues to demonstrate that NATO remains a major threat not only to the security of our country and our region, but also to the entire world, as it seeks to provoke a regional war that carries the potential to escalate into a global conflict.

The imperialist system as a whole is increasing the level of aggression, not merely because of the unpredictability and recklessness of U.S. actions. What we need in the face of this all-out assault is to transform our own side into a force once again. As our world moves toward mass destruction and the danger of annihilation, its

fundamental need is for us to confront the very root of this system.

Today, the struggle against NATO becomes even more important precisely for these reasons. Throughout its history—and today as well—NATO continues to make and implement plans in line with the needs of the imperialist-capitalist system, shedding blood without hesitation.

At the same time, it is necessary to intensify the ideological and political struggle against attempts to whitewash NATO or obscure its role. Recent attacks have once again shown that hosting U.S. and NATO bases does not protect countries and their peoples; on the contrary, it throws them further into the fire, turning them into bases of aggression or potential targets. Despite this, the lie that NATO membership guarantees the security of countries must be exposed even more forcefully.



## **Why is it important for communist and workers' parties to meet in Havana this year?**

**Nahide Özkan,**

*Member of TKP Party Council*

In the twentieth century, the existence of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc led to an “extraordinary” deviation in the course of capitalism. The unrestrained aggression of the imperialist system, backed by colonial accumulation, was somewhat restrained by strong working-class governments, both in domestic social policies and in the arena of international relations, and bound by certain rules that gave it a “civilized” face.

With the collapse of the socialist block, imperialism, gradually returning to its “normal”

course, entered 2026 with a challenge that clearly demonstrated it now recognizes neither borders nor rules. The US attack on Venezuela and the subsequent oil blockade targeting Cuba became a clear manifestation of the trend that has become increasingly evident since the 1990s.

Much can be said about the unique aspects of Trump's personal character, the increasingly prominent conflicts in the country's domestic political climate, and the competition and friction with other imperialist actors in the background of this aggression perpetrated by US imperialism. Of course, all of these are elements that communists must consider in their analysis of the current situation. However, the crucial point is to identify the fundamental trend and to build the struggle strategy around this trend.

The structural crisis and collective orientation of imperialism point to an unrestrained and lawless aggression against the working peoples of the world. In such a scenario, where socialism does not exert its influence, there is no decisive response to the search for checks and balances, either domestically or internationally.

It is clear that the response must come from

the world working class; and communists and working-class parties are obligated to lead such response. This historical task becomes unavoidable when the issue is an open siege and attack on socialist Cuba, which is a red line for the world communist movement.

Cuba, with its ability to survive after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc, has made a significant mark on history. However, the issue was not simply that it emerged from the darkness of the 1990s and survived. Despite its small scale and limited resources, Cuba, under extremely heavy blockade conditions, demonstrated a unique and inspiring experience regarding the subjective dimension of revolutionary struggle with its will to advance socialism. It built a vast body of knowledge that shed light on the role of revolutionary leadership, social organization, ideological struggle, principles, and moral values in the working-class struggle, illuminating the path for the working people of the world.

Humanity is paying a heavy price for postponing the struggle for socialism in the face of the brutality of the market system. There is a need to strengthen and connect the working classes with a concrete socialist program that will overthrow capitalism. Cuban

revolutionary thought, which does not seek “suitable objectivity” for insisting on socialism, constitutes a living example of the will and courage that the world working class needs.

Cuba, while militantly and uncompromisingly confronting the threatening siege it faces today, is once again demonstrating the power of socialism. Despite all the negative propaganda about the country’s surrender, it is beginning to be said in mainstream media that Cuba, due to its socialist character, is unlike other countries. It should not be forgotten that if Cuba is able to resist the US today, it is also due to the absence of a capitalist class that provides a very fertile ground for collaboration with imperialism. The absence of a privileged capitalist class is also what forms the basis of the social unity that has been of key importance in Cuba’s history and present.

A strong solidarity with Cuba, going beyond mere symbolism, is essential not only for fulfilling our humanitarian and moral obligation to the Cuban people, but also for strengthening the class stance needed for a consistent struggle against imperialism, which threatens the entire world.

One of the most important manifestations of this solidarity will be the holding of this year's international meeting of the communist and workers' parties in Havana. Making the socialist perspective in the struggle against imperialism more visible through such meetings will not only strengthen Cuba's struggle but will also inspire anti-imperialist struggles waged by peoples in different parts of the world.

The clear prioritization of solidarity with Cuba at the forthcoming international meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Havana will be crucial, as it allows communists to coordinate around a common objective and generate a worldwide impact.

We said Cuba is our red line; it is our duty and our obligation to internationalist Cuba to clearly and unequivocally establish this red line, to show once again that the Cuban people are not alone.



Protest against US blockade on Cuba in İstanbul with the call of TKP, February 22, 2026

## From politicized legal cases to the ministry: Akin Gürlek



The most striking change in the cabinet reshuffle carried out in February with the signature of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was the one in the Ministry of Justice.

Prosecutor Akin Gürlek, whose name has been associated with many cases widely debated as being political rather than purely legal—most notably the case against İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu from the CHP—was appointed Minister of Justice.

## **An important post after the coup attempt**

Akın Gürlek was appointed as a heavy penal court judge in İstanbul following the pro-US military coup attempt carried out on July 15, 2016 by the movement led by Fethullah Gülen, a former ally of AKP.

Serving in three different heavy penal courts in İstanbul, Gürlek signed a number of conviction decisions during his tenure involving not only figures linked to the Gülen movement but also various politicians and representatives of democratic mass organizations. Among these were the sentences given to former HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş and Sırrı Süreyya Önder for “supporting a terrorist organization,” as well as the penalties imposed on CHP İstanbul Provincial Chair Canan Kaftancıoğlu for her social media posts.

## **The path to the ministry opened in 2022**

With his signature on controversial rulings that sparked public reaction and led to debates about the justice system, Gürlek’s name became widely known. In 2022 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Justice. This was followed in 2024 by his appointment as the Chief Public Prosecutor of İstanbul.

When Gürlek assumed this post, local elections

had taken place only a few months earlier. The ruling AKP had suffered significant losses, while the main opposition CHP emerged as the largest party and won the mayoralties of the three largest cities.

The resulting tension between the central and local administrations also signaled a political crisis. Cooperation between the CHP and the HDP—known as the “urban consensus,” where one party refrained from fielding candidates in some municipalities in favor of the other—became a political target for the AKP after the elections. Legal operations were launched against several municipalities, including some involved in this cooperation, on charges of corruption and supporting terrorism. Trustees were appointed to some municipalities.

The first of these was İstanbul’s Esenyurt Municipality, where the arrest of the CHP mayor initiated the process—one that bore Gürlek’s signature. Similar cases followed in other district municipalities, and the process eventually extended to İstanbul Metropolitan Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, widely seen as the primary target.

### **The İmamoğlu case**

Following an investigation launched by Gürlek, on March 19, 2025, more than a hundred

people—including Ekrem İmamoğlu—were arrested in connection with the case that had long been rumored to be in preparation. Nearly five hundred individuals are currently being tried on charges such as “forming a criminal organization,” bribery, fraud, and bid rigging. In the course of the trial, which many believe effectively sidelined İmamoğlu—considered the strongest potential challenger to President Erdoğan—the most recent CHP party congress was also investigated on allegations of electoral fraud. With some defendants turning state witnesses, the accusations broadened to include a wide spectrum of allegations ranging from money laundering to espionage.

These arrests, interpreted by critics as a violation of the right to vote and stand for election, triggered mass protests attended by hundreds of thousands of people.

During this period, for the first time in Turkey, the name of a jurist became almost as widely known as that of leading politicians.

### **Internal struggles within the AKP**

Gürlek’s name was also mentioned in investigations extending into circles within the AKP itself. Among these were probes targeting money-laundering mechanisms. One such

investigation reportedly focused on Can Holding, a major conglomerate and media group known for its political proximity to certain factions within the government.

These and similar investigations were interpreted by some observers as part of ongoing internal struggles within the AKP—both over the distribution of economic resources and over leadership prospects in a post-Erdoğan era.

### **The message sent**

For these reasons, the appointment of İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor Akin Gürlek as Minister of Justice sparked widespread debate. Appointing a figure associated with controversial judicial processes to head the Ministry of Justice can be interpreted as a political message from the AKP to the political circles and to society at large.



## Privatizations in Turkey



# \$73.2B

## PRIVATIZATION RECEIPTS

Privatizations in Turkey as an economic programme started in 1986. Between 1986 and 2003, privatization receipts totaled approximately USD 8 billion. As of 2025, the cumulative total reached USD 73.2 billion. Thus, 89% of the total amount of privatizations between 1986 and 2025 were conducted under the AKP government.



# 20 State owned ENTERPRICES

In 1995, Turkey was in possession of 278 state-owned enterprises. This number dropped to 240 in the early 2000s as a result of privatizations. Under the AKP government, the number of wholly or majority state-owned enterprises dropped further to 71 according to 2023 data. As state-owned enterprises are privatized at full speed, current estimates suggest roughly 20 remain wholly or majority state-owned.



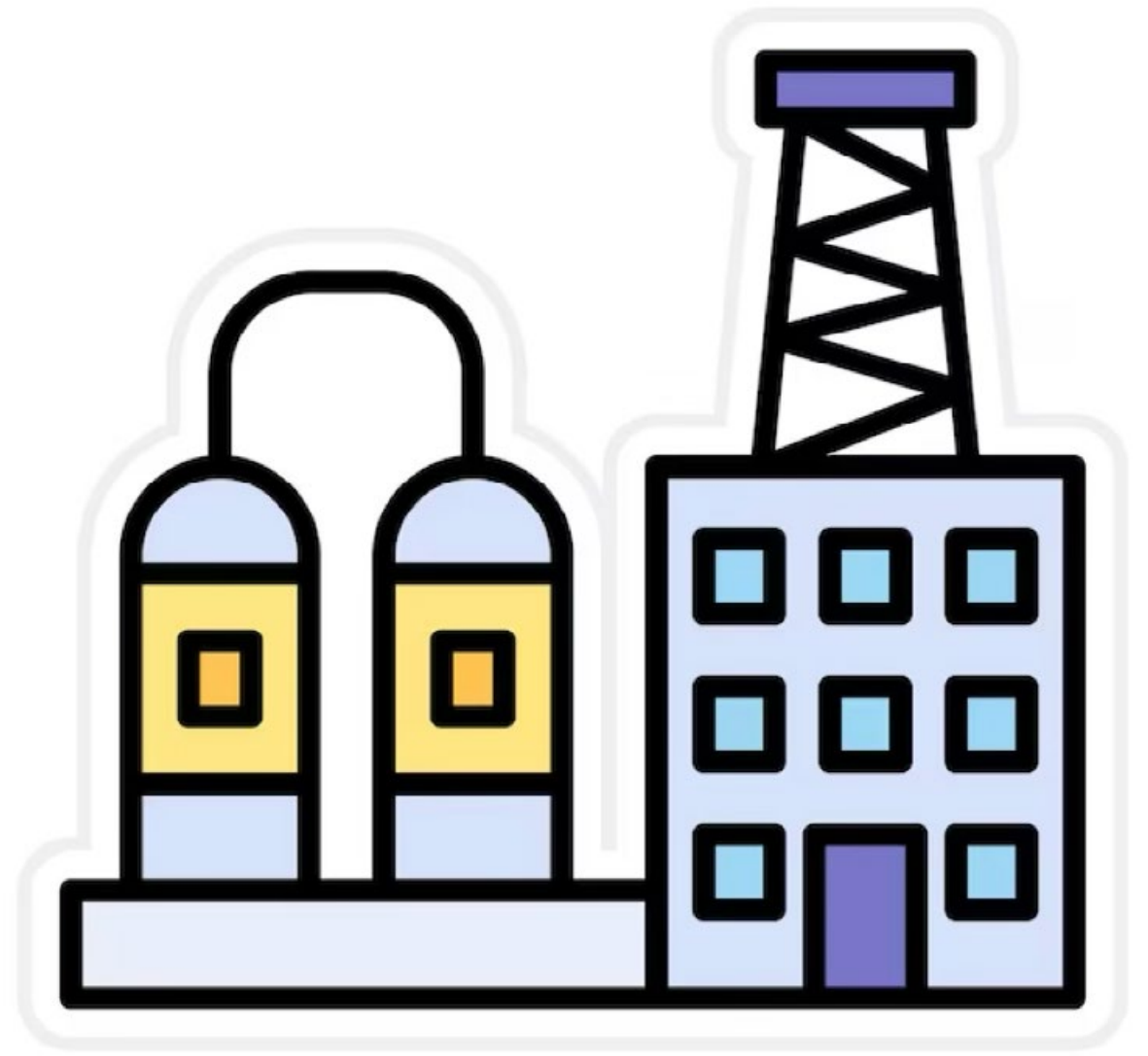
# 75% Transfer

## TO ELECTRIC COMPANIES

In Turkey, electricity distribution services were handed over completely to the private sector in 2013. But as a result of the negligence of required inspection, maintenance and renovation by the companies, last year saw several wildfires with many citizens losing their lives as in previous years. In addition, funds amounting to 75 percent of last year's ministry budget were transferred to electricity distribution companies under the name of "General Lighting Payment." In 2026, the holding company owned by the second-ranked individual on Forbes Turkey's richest list (fortune: USD 5.1 billion) reported that its largest profit source was electricity distribution assets acquired through privatization.

# \$4.14B

## GREAT GESTURE TO THE CAPITAL



Tüpraş (Turkish Petroleum Refineries), one of Turkey's largest and most profitable industrial enterprises, had an annual revenue of approximately \$13 billion when it was privatized in 2005. The company supplied fuel to the Turkish military and played a strategic role in the national economy by processing crude oil. Despite this, it was sold to the Koç Holding–Shell joint venture group for only \$4.14 billion.

# \$2B

## PUBLIC RESOURCES GIVEN TO CAPITAL FOR NOTHING

Another strategic institution in Turkey was Petkim, a public petrochemical company established in 1965 by Turkish Petroleum. The privatization process for the company began with a tender in 2003. In 2008, a 51% public stake in Petkim was transferred to the SOCAR–Turcas partnership for approximately \$2 billion. The remaining public shares were also transferred to SOCAR in the following years.

# Highlights from Turkish Foreign Policy



## **Diplomacy on the Iran war and conflicting signals**

When US threats against Iran were still looming, Turkey was trying to position itself as a mediator. After the threats materialized, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the events, describing both the US–Israel attack on Iran and Iran’s retaliatory strikes against third countries as an “Israeli provocation” that dragged the United States into war.

Although Iranian Foreign Minister Arakchi and Turkey’s Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan presented a friendly image at their joint press conference in Ankara at the end of January, their remarks reflected underlying regional

rivalries. Fidan argued that Israel was trying to provoke the US while downplaying Washington's role in the threats against Iran. Arakchi responded that Israel could act only because of support from the US and several European countries, warning regional states to be cautious.

President Erdoğan said he was "deeply saddened" by the attacks on Iran but called Iran's strikes on US bases in other countries "unacceptable." Repeating that Netanyahu had provoked the US, he called on "both sides" for restraint. He attributed the collapse of negotiations between Iran and the US to a crisis of confidence while again accusing Israel of poisoning the process. With the US and Israel striking Iran again less than a year after previous attacks disrupted talks with Tehran, it is difficult to speak of any confidence left to be in crisis.

Although the Turkish government cooperated with the US and Israel to weaken Iran's regional influence, it was also known that it did not want aggression of this scale. Beyond the risk that instability in Iran could drag neighboring countries, including Turkey, into the conflict, the presence of US bases in Turkey highlights another dimension of this concern. After Iran attacked US bases in Gulf countries, Erdoğan and Fidan contacted representatives of all

regional countries except Iran, beginning with the Gulf states.

On the fourth day of the attacks, US Ambassador to Turkey and Special Envoy to Syria Tom Barrack arrived in Ankara and met with Fidan. On the same day, EBRD President Renaud-Basso also visited Ankara. Although the meetings' details were not disclosed, Fidan later told reporters that ending the war would require Iran to accept US conditions and return to negotiations. He said Washington's minimum demand was the destruction of Iran's core military capabilities and that it ultimately sought regime change.

The next day, in an interview on state television, Fidan said the process should proceed in a way that would not leave Iran feeling "humiliated," while also describing Khamenei's death as a "window of opportunity." He criticized Iran for failing to respond quickly to US demands during the Oman talks and argued that attacks on Gulf bases were a misguided strategy that risked leaving Iran isolated. He also pointed to intelligence failures surrounding Khamenei's killing and suggested that Iran should first assess its own capacity before confronting the US and Israel.

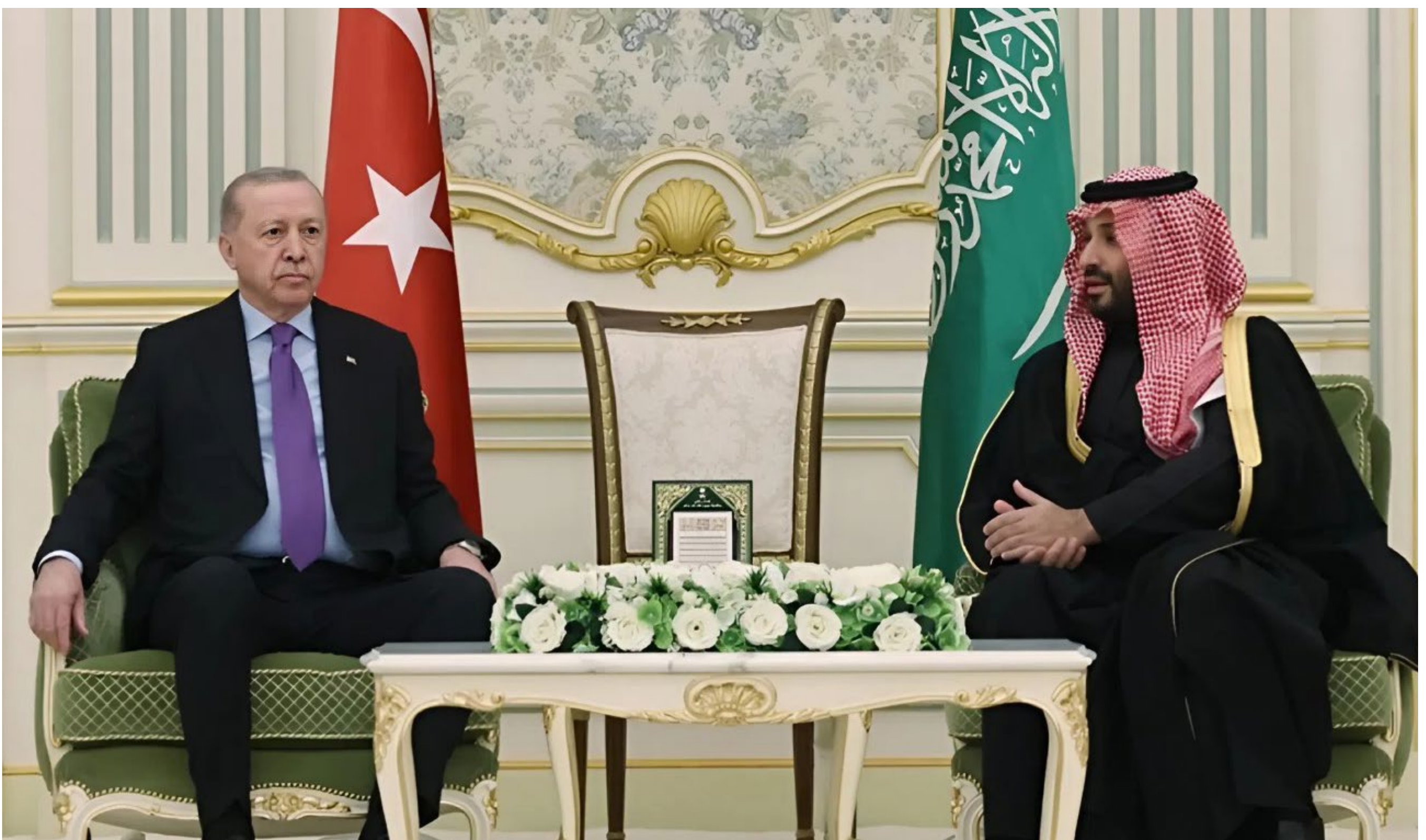
These remarks, which at times seem to imply submission to US demands, also suggest that Ankara does not fully intend such a course. The difference in tone between Erdoğan's and Fidan's statements since the beginning of the attacks may indicate either a real divide or a division of roles. What remains clear, however, is that Turkey is collaborating with the United States.

It should also be noted that throughout this process, pro-government media have continued to send deliberately contradictory messages regarding Iran. On one hand, the narrative suggests that the US and Israel are plotting to drag Turkey into war, while on the other, it portrays Iran as targeting Turkey and implies that Ankara may respond. These conflicting narratives do not reflect confusion but rather the government's pragmatic foreign policy approach, designed to keep all options open. This strategy simultaneously constructs a "resistance" narrative for negotiations with the US and NATO while preparing public opinion for a potential escalation or conflict with Iran.

### **Search for stability in the Middle East?**

The European Parliament adopted a resolution titled "The situation in northeast Syria" on February 12 stating that the countries in the

region should refrain from military operations that could undermine the ceasefire or from supporting armed groups. In the same resolution, the withdrawal of US troops from Syria is met with regrets. In response, Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a condemnation, stating that Turkey's role in keeping Syria stable and on its own feet is overlooked, and that more effort is needed to understand the realities on the ground.



On the other hand, Hakan Fidan's suggestion of a new operation in Iraq during a television program does not align well with the supposed sensitivity towards the independence and stability of countries. The minister, who stated that it is Iraq's turn after the PKK laid down its arms in Turkey and the HTS-SDF agreement in Syria, first accused the Iraqi government of allowing the PKK to occupy its territory; then claimed that

the issue can be “resolved” in a few days by the advance of the Iraqi Shiite group Hashd al-Shaabi on the ground and Turkey’s advance from the air. Following reactions from Iraq, Turkey’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs accused the Iraqi media of distorting the Minister’s words, while Turkey’s ambassador to Baghdad claimed that Fidan was not talking about Iraqi internal affairs or the Iraqi people, but about PKK elements, bringing forward the excuse of a faulty translation. A few days after his controversial statements, Minister Fidan met with the Iraqi Defense Minister in Ankara, but the content of the meeting was not disclosed, nor was any press release made after the meeting.

### **First resolution for “peace”: Guaranteed profits**

The Chief Commissioner of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, Ali Shaath, made his first overseas visit to Ankara on February 14 following the establishment of the committee, but the content of the meeting was not disclosed. On February 9, Director General of Gaza’s Board of Peace, Nikolay Mladenov, was also hosted in Ankara. The bilateral talks are likely both related to Gaza’s Board of Peace, which held its first meeting on February 19. At a meeting held in Washington, attended by Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan representing President Erdoğan, a \$17 billion donation was pledged

for “reconstruction”. Fidan reiterated that they wanted to provide military contributions to the International Stabilization Force (ISF) in addition to humanitarian aid, but Israel rejected the request once again.

The sincerity of the Peace Council was once again confirmed by US Ambassador to Israel Huckabee’s statement of “an Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates”. Although many countries and institutions in the region, particularly the Palestinian Authority, reacted to the statement, the silence of the ruling party AKP drew attention. The government in Turkey signed a joint statement with regional countries but did not even tackle the issue in its rhetoric; it was quietly shared on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## **Green economy and sustainable external dependence**

President Erdoğan began February with a high-profile Gulf-Cairo tour. In Saudi Arabia, a renewable energy agreement was signed including a \$2 billion investment in Turkey, a purchase guarantee, and continued dependence on foreign resources for both fossil fuels and renewables. Alongside LNG and nuclear deals with the US, ongoing Russian-Iranian oil and gas imports, and projects like the \$210 billion

Akkuyu nuclear plant, Turkey's budget deficit is set to rise sharply. Another topic of negotiation was Turkey's domestic fighter jet program, KAAN, which still relies on US-imported engines due to technical and cost limitations. While Erdoğan appears to be pressuring Saudi Arabia to purchase KAAN jets, officials are focused on F-35s, though Turkish Aerospace Industries plans to open an office in Saudi Arabia.

### **A thaw in relations with Egypt**

Erdoğan's Gulf diplomatic visits concluded in Cairo, marking his second visit in two years despite previously calling Sisi a "murderer" after the Muslim Brotherhood's overthrow. Similar to Saudi talks, it was announced that an ammunition production facility would be established in Egypt and Turkey would export air defense systems. With Cyprus and Greece deepening ties with Israel, these military agreements may signal the first steps toward a



new Eastern Mediterranean alliance. Although Turkey and Egypt had opposed each other in Libya, Turkey is now leading the development of Egypt's relations with the new government. The talks with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar align with Turkey's broader strategy of increasing its influence in regional politics and promoting cooperation on issues such as Gaza and Iran.

## **Turkey's expanding engagement in Africa and Asia**

Turkey has long provided military support to Somalia, though the Ministry of National Defense remained silent regarding alleged F-16 deployments, issuing neither confirmation nor denial. Following Israel's recognition of Somaliland, Turkey promptly issued a counter-statement, and during Erdoğan's visit to Egypt, Turkey and Egypt affirmed Somalia's national integrity. Turkey has focused intensive efforts on Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti over the past decade, investing in hospitals, highways, associations, and entities previously linked to the Fethullah Gülen movement, alongside diplomatic contacts and mediation. Similarly, in Asia, the "Asia Anew Initiative" is active in Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, with TİKA (a government agency through which Turkey carries out development, investment, and diplomatic activities abroad) conducting

diplomacy and investments, particularly in arms, energy, and fast-moving consumer goods.

## **Turkey in US-Europe tension**

The Munich Security Conference was dominated by remarks of havoc and the defense of Europe without the US. At the NATO exercise in Germany, Turkey stood out with its participation of 2,200 personnel, while the absence of the US drew attention. Erdoğan emphasized that an attempt at establishing a new security architecture in Europe without Turkey would be futile.

Turkey has NATO's second largest army and its military production capacity ranks eleventh in the global arms industry. The Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Straits increase the possibility of Turkey becoming an outpost for NATO's military buildup.

## Time to part ways

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey has issued a 15-point statement on the most important current issues facing working people in Turkey – and the path forward: call for the working people to part ways with the bourgeois class of Turkey. A class approach to the “peace process” in Turkey and the Neo-Ottomanist strategy of the government is included in the statement.

In order to read the full statement, click [here](#).

## The intense agenda of the anti-imperialist struggle



TKP Central Committee issued a [statement](#) against the aggression towards Iran by the US and genocidal Israel. In the statement, TKP highlighted that there is no room for ambiguity in the face of this barbaric aggression, stating the “Beginning with ‘but Iran...’ is to align with U.S. and Israeli aggression.”

TKP organized demonstrations in front of the NATO base in İzmir and İncirlik base in Adana. Gathering with the call of TKP, protesters marched with the

banner “Down with imperialism, down with Zionism!” and chanted slogans “The occupiers always lose” and “The Iranian people are not alone,”. Besides expressing solidarity with the Iranian people and protesting the foreign intervention it was emphasized that the U.S. and NATO bases in our country must be closed, the foreign soldiers must be expelled, and the intelligence support provided from our territory to the United States and Israel must be terminated immediately.

## **Actions for solidarity with Cuba**

TKP continues its determined solidarity with Cuba. Following the Central Committee statement titled [“Cuba Will Not Be Defeated!”](#), friends of Cuba gathered in front of the U.S. Embassy in Ankara under the slogan **“No to U.S. Genocide! Hands Off Cuba!”**.

A large demonstration was also held in Istanbul.



Participants raised their voices against U.S. aggression, barbarism, and its arrogance in interfering in and dictating the internal affairs of other countries. Speaking in Istanbul, TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan concluded his speech:

*“Our final word is this: We stand with Cuba. We trust the Cuban people and their leadership, and we will do everything within our power. But if you lay a hand on Cuba, we will break all this hand’s extensions in Turkey.”*

The Communist Youth of Turkey (TKG) continued its solidarity with Cuba at universities. Solidarity banners were hung on several campuses.



TKP district houses in several cities hosted solidarity events with the participation of the representative from the José Martí Cuba-Turkey Friendship Association and the Embassy of Cuba to Ankara. Friends of Cuba receive information on the latest situation in Cuba and discuss how to strengthen solidarity with Cuba in those gatherings.



# **A strong message from Turkey addressed to the U.S. Presidency: Hands off Cuba!**

The campaign initiated by the José Martí Cuba–Turkey Friendship Association, and endorsed by more than 500 journalists, artists, academics, trade unionists and intellectuals, is rapidly growing and drawing widespread public support.

## **Press Conference in solidarity with Cuba**

As the United States' economic blockade against Cuba deepens, the president of the José Martí Cuba–Turkey Friendship Association Nahide Özkan, the Consulate General of the Republic of Cuba in İstanbul Raúl Ernesto Madrigal Cárdenas and TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan held a joint press conference in İstanbul. Drawing attention to the energy crisis and fuel shortages on the island as a result of the US blockade, the speakers announced the launch of a broad solidarity campaign in Turkey—one that will also include financial assistance—to strengthen the resilience of the Cuban people.



# Letter from TKP CC to the KKE leadership regarding the historical documents on the 200 communists in Kaisariani

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey issued a [letter](#) to the leadership of the Communist Party of Greece regarding the photographs that capture the last moments of the communist militants who fell at Kaisariani on May 1.

You can also read the TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan's related comments [here](#).

## Protest at the Munich Security Conference

As the United States' economic blockade against Cuba deepens, the president of the José Martí Cuba-Turkey Friendship Association Nahide Özkan, the Consulate General of the Republic of Cuba in İstanbul Raúl Ernesto Madrigal Cárdenas and TKP General Secretary Kemal Okuyan held a joint press conference in İstanbul. Drawing attention to the energy crisis and fuel shortages on the island as a result of the US blockade, the speakers announced the launch of a broad solidarity campaign in Turkey—one that will also include financial assistance—to strengthen the resilience of the Cuban people.



# On the 3rd anniversary of the devastating earthquakes: We will neither forget nor forgive. We will hold them accountable!



On February 6th, 2023, a series of devastating earthquakes hit southern Turkey. Many cities in the region suffered extensive damage. According to official figures, which are indeed unreliable, Turkey lost 53,537 citizens in the February 6 earthquakes; and over 107,000 people were injured.

On the 3rd anniversary of the disaster, the TKP Central Committee issued a [statement](#) and declared: "We will neither forget nor forgive the murderers of our people! We will hold every single representative of this system accountable!"

In Hatay, one of the provinces most severely affected by the earthquake, a mass march took place to commemorate those who lost their lives and to protest the order that led to such a destruction.