



# **NEWS & VIEWS**

*A perspective from CHP*

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**REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY**  
Foreign Relations Department

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## Highlights from CHP Chairman Kılıçdaroğlu's Speech

**"We have adopted the fundamental philosophy of living in peace, not separation"**

7 July 2020

CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, in the party's group meeting [on Tuesday] started with the words "Our biggest wish is to live in a peaceful Turkey."



"Of course, we will have differences, but when we accept the differences as richness instead of division in the society; we could see that we all live in peace in this beautiful country," said Kılıçdaroğlu. "All citizens should know that the political institution is preventing this to happen."

CHP - regardless of identity, regardless of faith, embraces all citizens said Kılıçdaroğlu and continued: "We don't make any distinctions. Just me? No. All of our mayors are acting with the same principle and with the same philosophy."

**"There is no parallel governor, no parallel district governor, no parallel land registry manager. There is one governor in a province. Why multiple bar associations?"**

On the bill introduced by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) overseeing Turkey's bar associations to split into smaller groups is "dividing the defense," Kılıçdaroğlu said. He added, "There cannot be a parallel state, no parallel bar. The AKP aims to divide the defense, professionals of the justice mechanism of the country. They divided the judiciary, divided the media, divided the business world, now they will divide one of the most important pillars of the judiciary: Defense", he stated.

Kılıçdaroğlu claimed this would lead to parallel bars being formed in the provinces. "Why multiple bars? You also have the right to supervise the bar associations as the central government. If there is corruption, you can intervene, if there is an irregularity, you will examine it," he asked. "There is no parallel governor, no parallel district governor, no parallel land registry manager. There is one governor in a province. Why

multiple bar associations?" he questioned. The 28-article bill contains changes in the Lawyer's Act and some other laws that regulate the duties of the lawyers and the formation of the bar associations.

### **Sivas and Başbağlar are griefs of our recent past**

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu said that "The Sivas massacre and the Başbağlar massacre are the griefs of our recent past. Every year, our deputies go to Sivas and Başbağlar to attend the commemoration ceremonies to avoid similar grief in these lands. The people who were killed in Sivas and Başbağlar were our people. We have to commemorate those people with respect and love. We are sending our condolences to their relatives and to our nation."

### **On Gallipoli Fire**

The fire began to be under control in the peninsula of Gallipoli; he said "we do not have casualties, but we have to remember that the trees are living creatures. We have to protect our forests, to leave a better future for our children."

### **On Hendek Explosion: "There is no accident, there is murder"**

Elaborating on an explosion at a fireworks factory in the northwestern province of Sakarya, Kılıçdaroğlu said the incident was not an "accident," but a "workplace homicide," noting that the CHP will continue to defend the rights of the people killed and injured there. "The explosion in Sakarya shows how much the government values people. All he looks for is rentierism and money. There is no accident, there is murder," the CHP leader said. Kılıçdaroğlu said that despite the factory having had a bad record of previous incidents, the owner of the business was able to keep it open. Kılıçdaroğlu said, "Those people were working in difficult conditions. The state had given a license for working. Many citizens were working 24 hours a day" Kılıçdaroğlu continued while counting the names of the workers died. "In 11 years, there were 4 explosions. Wherever the owner of this factory gets power, support, he reopens his factory every time without taking any precautions. Immediately after the explosion our deputies went to the region. After the explosion Erdoğan calls the boss of the factory. He did not call the workers, or their relatives, and did not send any condolences... Even if people of Sakarya will not own the accident, we promise we'll state the claim of 7 people."

### **"They think they will succeed with pressure"**

CHP Chairman Kılıçdaroğlu also reacted to Halk TV and Tele1 penalties imposed by RTÜK. Kılıçdaroğlu said the 5-day temporary broadcasting penalty given to Halk TV and Tele1 TV channels is the biggest punishment in the history of the Turkish Republic.

He also states that Barış Pehlivan, Murat Ağırel, Hülya Kılınç, Müyesser Yıldız and Osman Kavala were detained despite the court decisions. Kılıçdaroğlu argues that this is upon the imposition of power, "Keep them inside, put them in jail. Delay hearings."

### **On Press Advertising Agency**

Kılıçdaroğlu argued that the Press Advertising Agency (Basın İlan Kurumu) also sentence newspapers and free journalists who wrote the facts continued while stating Press Advertising Agency is asking questions such as: "Why are you criticizing power? 'Why are you telling the truth?' 'Why do you say there are unemployment and poverty?' Why do 'children go to bed hungry? ". Press Advertising Agency has turned into an institution which receives instructions from the government and censors the independent media.

### **"To protect the reputation of Parliament is our common task"**

Kılıçdaroğlu indicated that the TGNA Presidency had made a criminal complaint against Yılmaz Özdil, the columnist of Sözcü newspaper to the column titled "What the Bar Associations are doing in the TGNA" with the allegations of public humiliation and insult.

He addressed [the President of the Assembly] "If you are so sensitive about the reputation of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, have you ever wondered who took the 500 thousand lira bribe? Don't you know that AK Party and MHP deputies were at the meeting where that bribe was spoken? Didn't I declare those who remained silent about 500 thousand lira bribery taken in Antalya, Serik? If you are going to protect the parliament's reputation, you have to call those two deputies first."

### **Kılıçdaroğlu: Presidential candidate should not lead a political party**

*5 July 2020*

"Party leaders should not run for the presidency" CHP Chair Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu said signaling that he would not run as a candidate for head of state but that the mayor of either Istanbul or Ankara could. "The person nominated to the presidency should not be a chairman of a party," said Kılıçdaroğlu, stressing that the president must pledge impartiality. Kılıçdaroğlu said it was necessary to talk with the party's coalition partners first, adding that it was too early to decide whether each coalition party would nominate a candidate from their party or nominate a joint candidate.

Kılıçdaroğlu also left the door open to cooperation with the new Future and DEVA parties, saying criticisms of the past should not blur future collaboration.



## CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu Accepted Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Labor and Social Security Minister Faiz Sucuoğlu

8 July 2020



Republican People's Party Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu received Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Labor and Social Security Minister Faiz Sucuoğlu and TRNC Ankara Ambassador Kemal Köprülü and his accompanying delegation at his office at the CHP Headquarters. During the meeting, CHP leader Kılıçdaroğlu was accompanied by Vice Chairman and Party

Spokesperson Faik Öztrak and Vice Chairman Ünal Çeviköz.

## CHP Vice-Chairman and Spokesperson Öztrak: We will fully exercise our rights arising from the TGNA Bylaws

6 July 2020

Reminding on the negotiations in the Justice Commission of the bar proposals which were completed on Sunday night, Öztrak said that 'It is a project to divide and concur justice' similar to the imperial powers implemented during the armistice period. He added "they want to end the 'justice pillar' of the modernization project of the Turkish Republic."



"All over the world, there are works on prevention of lynching, on prevention of the unauthorized use of personal data, on issues such as the taxation of earnings from those channels. Turkey could work with all stakeholders with the opinion of everyone" Öztrak said. But instead "we ban and cover social

media channels altogether."

Öztrak continued as follows: "Creativity, added value, trust, investment, prosperity should not flourish in a country where digital media is censored and banned. For the

last seven quarters -almost two years- investments in our country have been steadily decreasing. Foreign capital has been running without looking behind. Also, concessions and guarantees are given, getting renounced to invest in the auto giant Turkey. We missed a direct investment of over \$1 billion. In a country without law and justice, without proper statistics, investors can not foresee."

## Highlights from CHP Group Deputy Chairman Engin Özkoç

**On December 17-25: "I wish he could speak about 17-25 December in a reasonable time"**

8 July 2020

At a press conference in Parliament CHP Group Deputy Chairman Engin Özkoç addressed topics on the agenda. *"I find it beneficial to evaluate the files on 17-25 December,"* DEVA party leader Ali Babacan stated. Özkoç replied, *"I wish he could speak about 17-25 December in a reasonable time."*

## MÜSiAD is protecting the factory owner, is anyone protecting the employee?



Özkoç, while noting that he is a deputy from Sakarya, said that the employees of the Sakarya fireworks factory had to work at this factory while bearing death in their mind. He said "MÜSiAD organized a dinner because its owner of this factory was MÜSiAD Sakarya chief. The President of MÜSiAD has close connections with Recep Tayyip

Erdoğan and other ministers protecting him. Well, is there anyone who protects the workers?" he asked.

## "We Will Continue to Fight for Bar Associations"

Özkoç on the proposal on the bar associations said that the debates at the TGNA would continue for days. He was asked if they would appeal to the Constitutional Court regarding the law proposal on the bar associations and said that *CHP would continue to resist and struggle.*

## “Open Haghia Sophia As Soon As Possible “

While answering a question about "opening Haghia Sophia for divine service", Özkoç argued that it is not true that the debate about opening Haghia Sophia to divine service. The debate is about starvation and poverty in the country. He also reminded that the Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu still could not clarify the event related to playing a song [Ciao Bella] from a minaret in İzmir.

## Bar Associations

### CHP's Muharrem Erkek called AKP: betrayal to history

Calling for the withdrawal of the multiple bar legislation proposal, which is described as a FETÖ project, CHP's Muharrem Erkek said, "This offer is a betrayal to history, betrayal to justice and betrayal to this country. Pull back this proposal from the Assembly before it is late."



CHP Vice Chairman Muharrem Erkek said "despite the objections of lawyers and the opposition, criticizing the 'multiple bar' proposal, which was accepted by the Justice Commission and brought to the General Assembly, also discussed in the Justice Commission, we registered a note in history. Again, this offer, this freak

offer lowers the defence."

Erkek used the following statements: "The Bars are regarded as the founding elements of the defence of the judiciary that is so according to the law, you should take this offer immediately to Cumhur Alliance, call your proposal back: do not divide the bar associations, do not separate the defence, do not disintegrate them."

## CHP Vice Chairman Saribal: The Agricultural Sector Has Been Worsened In The Presidential Government System

8 July 2020

Orhan Saribal, Vice Chairman on CHP Agricultural Policies and Agricultural Organizations, evaluated the effects of the 2-year Presidential System on the agricultural sector at a press conference held at the CHP Headquarters. Saribal stated

that the agriculture sector deteriorated every year during the AKP era and has got even worse with the Presidential Government System.

### Decline in Agricultural Product



Although agricultural production increased by 7.5 times in 2019 compared to 2002, the country remained below 12 times the GDP growth in the same period.

Turkey's agricultural revenues of 51.9 billion dollars in 2017, in 2018 with the Presidential System of Government stepped in 44.9 billion dollars, in 2019 amounted to 48.5 billion dollars. Our agricultural product in 2018 and 2019 is low as compared to 2017. Agricultural product loss in the last two years is 10.4 billion dollars; so, agrarian product loss in the last ten years is 107.3 billion dollars.

Turkey is the first country in the world to have falling agricultural revenues. World agrarian output rose by an annual average of 37.6%.

### Agriculture Growth Decreased

While the agricultural sector grew by an average of 2.7%, in the period of 2003-2017 of the AKP government, the agricultural sector grew by 2.5% after the transition to Presidential government system.

### Low Employment Rates

As a result of leaving the villages hoping to work in better and profitable jobs, the meltdown started with the AKP in agricultural employment continued rapidly with the Presidential Government System. Today the average age of those engaged in agriculture in Turkey is over 55 years old. Measures for encouraging the young generation to work in agriculture should be taken and social life in the villages should be strengthened.

Before moving to the Presidential Government System, 5 million 58 thousand people were employed in the agricultural sector in March 2018 with a share of 17.7% among 28 million 499 thousand people.

According to the March 2020 labour force statistics announced by TURKSTAT on 10 June 2020, among the 26 million 133 thousand jobs, 4 million 280 thousand people



were employed with a 16.4% share. Over the past two years, 778 thousand people remained unemployed, with a 15.4% reduction in employment in the agricultural sector.

## **On Hasankeyf**

### **CHP Vice-Chair Karaca: They tried to bury the betrayal to Hasankeyf**

7 July 2020



Photo: Tarkan Açıklan/pinterest



Photo: Hasan Söylemez

CHP Vice Chairperson on Environmental Policies Gülizar Biçer Karaca reminded that the 12 thousand years of cultural heritage on Hasankeyf is underwater now. Also, the news "waiting for its guests with its new face" was offending. "Anatolia Agency is trying to bury the betrayal in Hasankeyf with such news. In Hasankeyf, the historical memory of the ancient Anatolian lands destroyed" she said.

She criticizes the failure in including Hasankeyf in the UNESCO World Heritage List. Karaca also said, "It was

the only historical site that met 9 of the ten criteria to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List."

She said that local people want to protect Hasankeyf, "The local people were very reactive to the decision. We have also expressed this. We also called the Ministry of Culture. There was a need to apply to UNESCO. We called on all of our citizens to 'demand it' Many of our citizens made this application. In response to the requests, the Ministry said: "your application has been received, necessary interventions will be made."

## **27th year of the Başbağlar Massacre**

5 July 2020

CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu stated his belief on terrorism and bullying would be defeated and the will to live in brotherhood in peace will take root in these lands.

President Kılıçdarođlu used the following statements in his message on 27th year of the Bařbađlar Massacre, in which 33 civilians were murdered, in Kemaliye district of Erzincan.

*"I curse the treacherous terrorist organization once more in the 27th anniversary of the Bařbađlar Massacre, and I commemorate our 33 innocent citizens who have been murdered."*

## **37th Ordinary Congress will be held on 25-26 July**

Preparations for the 37th Ordinary Congress, which was announced at the CHP on 28-29 March but was postponed to 25-26 July due to the new type of coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak, are ongoing.

CHP has decided to rent Bilkent Odeon as part of the Covid-19 measures, all hygiene and social distance rules will be applied during the Congress in line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Health. The participants will be checked continuously to follow the measures.

At the Congress, food and water needs of the participants will be met. Nobody will be taken as a guest apart from the few officials and press members.

On the first day of the Congress, presidential elections will be held, and on the second day, 60-person Party Assembly and High Disciplinary Board elections will be held. The first day elections are expected to end early in the evening, and the PM elections to be held on the second day can be extended.

Eight members of the PM consisting of 60 people in CHP are selected from the Science Management and Culture Platform (BYKP). Delegates choose 8 of the candidates nominated by Kılıçdarođlu and send them to PM.

The delegates may propose a "block list" proposal for the Congress not to extend the work of the Congress due to the pandemic. 1376 registered delegates are expected to attend the Congress.

## **TGNA Inquiry Rejected**

### **Parliamentary inquiry into firework factory explosion rejected**

After seven people lost their lives and 126 people were wounded in an explosion that took place at Byk Cořkunlar Firework Factory in Sakarya province on July 3, the Republican People's Party (CHP) requested a Parliamentary investigation into the incident.

However, the inquiry has been rejected by the MPs of ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).

### **'There should have been 50 meters between buildings'**

Speaking about their request at the Parliamentary General Assembly before it was taken to vote, main opposition CHP Group Deputy Chair Engin Özkoç referred to the statements of Minister of Interior Süleyman Soylu, who said that the factory was inspected three months before the incident. "Then, in response to Mr. Minister, I say, 'Arrest the ones who inspected the factory immediately.' Why? Because the Article 96 of the Bylaw pertaining to explosive substances stipulates that the buildings of a factory shall be built at a minimum distance of 50 meters from each other.

"There is a 20-meter distance between the buildings of this factory and they are located right next to each other." Özkoç also said that the walls of the factory should have been built with a material that would help it stand an explosion or fire for 120 minutes. Defining the factory in Sakarya as "a building made of thin walls with prefabricated structures," Özkoç also noted that occupational safety measures should have been taken at the factory:



"The explosives should not have been excessively stored, too many of them were stored there. The substances with the same explosive characteristics should not have been there. But they were there. None of the inspections were done and workers of the factory are not unionized."

Against this background, main opposition CHP's Özkoç has emphasized that the victim of this incident is not the owner of the factory, but "the ones who were working there for peanuts."

### **'Seven other explosions happened at the factory'**

As also reported in the press, Özkoç reminded the MPs that "seven explosions took place at that factory" before this latest explosion:

"Each time, the place of the factory was changed and, each time, this factory was built again even though it was not compliant with the rules. The rules of the inspections were not observed even though it was supposedly inspected and what is lost in the end is lives."

Within this context, Engin Özkoç reiterated his party's request for a Parliamentary investigation into the Sakarya firework factory explosion.

### **'We are still examining'**

Taking the floor after Özkoç, AKP Sakarya MP Çiğdem Erdoğan Atabek shared information about the works carried out after the explosion.

Indicating that a panel of experts was formed by the Sakarya Chief Public Prosecutor's Office, she said, "The investigation is being conducted with great sensitivity and attention. Five people, including the owner of the factory, considered to have responsibility for the incident, have been arrested so far. The panel of experts is still examining and working in the site."

Speaking after her, CHP's Özkoç said, "We are both Sakarya MPs, we are both making efforts for the good of Sakarya. But it is not about what we did after the accident, but what we should have been doing before."

Following these statements, the MPs took a vote on the Parliamentary inquiry and it was rejected by the votes of AKP and MHP MPs.

### **Parliamentary Query**

Yıldırım Kaya, Vice Chairman of the CHP and Ankara Deputy in his parliamentary query asked the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services: "While working within your Ministry, some of the people were dismissed with the decrees of the non-prosecution and acquittal after the treacherous coup attempt on July 15 were started to work while others were not because the judicial process continues."



Kaya said "It is claimed that some of the people have started to work whose judicial process is continuing State of Emergency Procedures Review Commission. Their mandate is constantly being extended, announced that it reviewed 1250 files per week. However, this work slowed down even

more during the pandemic process." Kaya added, "In the 2019 Report of the OHAL Transactions Review Commission, the decisions made by the Commission and the judicial authorities followed through the UYAP system. Primarily, the applications for which a decision of non-prosecution and acquittal examined."



Kaya said: "As the judicial process prolongs, those who are unemployed, have no work permit and are not employed become more victimized."

CHP Vice Chairman and Ankara Deputy Yıldırım Kaya asked the following questions in his proposal to the Turkish Parliament:

1- Is it true that some people in your Ministry - who have issued the decree of non-prosecution and acquittal from those who expelled with the decree- had started to work and in contrast, some of them have not started because the judicial process is continuing?

2- Is it true that some of the people whose judicial process is continuing are put into office?

3- What are some of the reasons for not starting some of those who are given non-prosecution and acquittal?

4- Will Hayri Anıl Çetin, Zonguldak SSI Provincial Directorate employee, who was given a non-prosecution in January 2018 and acquittal in March 2018 go back to hi work?

5- Is it on your agenda that people who are given non-prosecution and acquittal decisions will not be victimized?

## **Diplomacy**

### **Press Conference of Ünal Çeviköz Vice Chairperson of The Republican People's Party on The Developments in Foreign Policy**

*8 July 2020*

Distinguished Members of the Press,



It has been a long time since I held a press conference. I see that you are all in good health and have maintained your well-being during this period. I hope that we continue to be in good health and maintain our well-being in the coming period as well. Of course, the pandemic process has disrupted many things, but life goes on. For

that reason, seizing the earliest opportunity, I wanted to invite you to this press

conference today to express the views of the Republican People's Party on some important issues concerning international relations and foreign policy. I will concentrate on a couple of issues. First of all, we can say that topics such as Libya, İdlib, Iraq and Turkey's relations with the European Union come to the forefront as the main issues on the agenda. As you all know, as far as Libya is concerned, there has been a sudden stir most recently. First, according to some sources, the air defense system deployed by Turkey allegedly suffered significant damages after an attack on Al-Watiya airbase. Subsequently, since yesterday we have been receiving news of another attack in Al-Jufra, and it is reported that this time, the Libya's Government of National Accord carried out an airstrike on the Al-Jufra base.

## Libya

- Regarding Libya, as the Republican People's Party (CHP), we want to see the war between the Government based in Tripoli and the House of Representatives based in Tobruk come to a peaceful end and we want Libya to attain peace and stability as soon as possible. This is essential for the security of both the African continent and the Eastern Mediterranean. Furthermore, developments in Libya are also decisive in the global fight against terrorism. This must definitely be taken into consideration.
- The ongoing conflict in Libya also causes problems such as oil smuggling and mass migration from Libya to Europe to endure. As a matter of fact, we believe that Italy's concerns in this area played a major role in the visit of the Italian Defense Minister to Turkey yesterday.
- In this context, all countries that are a party to the crisis in Libya should comply with all the relevant UNSC resolutions regarding Libya, especially the resolutions on arms embargo, and finally, they should also make efforts to implement the decisions adopted at the Berlin Conference earlier this year.
- With its hard power policy on Libya, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has antagonized not only some segments among the Libyan people, but also countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, Algeria and France. The criticism against Turkey is also rising in the Arab world.
- Moreover, Moscow-Ankara relations are increasingly negatively affected by this situation. In addition, Turkey has started to experience problems at NATO and EU levels. Many people believe that the Operation IRINI, launched by the EU to enforce the arms embargo against Libya is an attempt to prevent Turkey from shipping arms to Libya by sea and by air. Tensions between France and Turkey have also been subject to a NATO investigation.
- Now I would like to ask you: When we have the opportunity to protect our economic interests through diplomacy, how sustainable and realistic is it to pursue a policy that tries to move forward by relying on military interventions?
- The AKP's policy on Libya is a new dimension of the neo-Ottoman foreign policy. The AKP has learned no lessons from what happened in Syria.

- The CHP has been advocating since the beginning that all countries should strictly comply with the UNSC's arms embargo against Libya. In that regard, we support all the steps taken to implement the relevant resolutions of the UNSC; and we maintain our position that Turkey should not be a part of the war in Libya. The AKP's partisan policy on Libya is unfortunately one of the factors increasing the tensions in Libya and the Mediterranean. We believe that these tensions will be overcome by complying with the UNSC's resolutions on the arms embargo against Libya and by implementing the decisions of the Berlin Conference. Otherwise, it would not be surprising to see the emergence of new tensions that involve Turkey as well.
- Let me underline the following: In my statements, I emphasized that all countries must comply strictly, and without exception, with the resolutions on the arms embargo.
- The weapons sent by other states to Libya must also be stopped in accordance with the embargo resolution. This is also against the resolutions of the UNSC. Let us make no mistake. The AKP government should not use the mistakes of other countries as a justification to maintain its own erroneous foreign policy.
- As CHP, respecting the international law is fundamental to us. For that reason, as a principle, we believe that the disrespectful acts of other countries shall not be taken as examples for us.

### **UNSC Ceasefire Resolution**

- In this context, I would also like to remind you the UNSC's ceasefire resolution again. As you know, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a 90-day global humanitarian ceasefire as part of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. This resolution is also critical in terms of humanitarian aid reaching to those in need. Therefore, we want the ongoing conflicts in the world to be ended as soon as possible.
- However, we would also like to underline and remind once again that this resolution does not include the fight against ISIS, Al Qaeda, Jabhat al-Nusra and formations declared as terrorist organizations by the UNSC. We believe that for the security of our country, it is of utmost importance that the AKP government is accurately informed on the coverage of this call for ceasefire.

### **Syria**

- Allow me to share my thoughts on Syria. As you know, Turkish lira is now being used as currency in northern Syria in the areas controlled by the Turkish Armed Forces and the armed groups backed by Turkey. Turkey inserting Turkish lira into the region through PTT (Turkish Post) branches and the terrorist organization HTS (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham) forcing the use of Turkish lira as currency, are casting serious doubts on the AKP government's plans regarding the future of Syria.

- Despite the fact that Syria's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence were continuously emphasized during the Astana Process; Turkey, which is an actor of the Astana Process, is creating a major contradiction by deploying troops in the Syrian territory, providing municipal services, appointing civilian administrators and paying the salaries of the local council members in areas under its control and most recently, by inserting Turkish lira in the region. This contradiction needs to be clarified.
- We are following the armed conflicts between the jihadists in Idlib. Al-Nusra Front (HTS) and the more radical Al Qaeda fractions opposing them are clashing with one another. The joint patrols by Russia and Turkey on the M4 highway, organized under the agreement in March have finally been launched, albeit with some difficulty. 20 rounds of patrols have been conducted so far. However, the increasingly heated ground in both Libya and Idlib could lead to major tensions in Turkey – Russia relations. It is becoming more and more difficult for Ankara and Moscow, who have been able to proceed with short-term agreements so far, to continue moving forward in harmony. Therefore, I would like to specifically point out that the dialogue between Ankara and Moscow should not be neglected.
- We have been articulating for years that the crisis in Syria, which has been going on since 2011, must end with a political solution that would be negotiated by the constituents of the people of Syria. It must be the Syrian people themselves who decide on how and by which government Syria will be governed. Based on this point of view, we believe that it is not appropriate for the Syria's natural resources and agricultural products to be controlled by certain groups and that this control is used as a bargaining chip against other elements in the region. We further believe that this situation will bring more instability to the region. The sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, security, and stability of Syria are directly related to the use of the country's natural resources, especially oil, in the interests of all Syrian people. This issue was emphasized in Article 4 of the conclusions of the tripartite summit between Turkey, Russia and Iran on July 1, 2020, where it says that the leaders have “expressed their opposition to the illegal seizure and transfer of oil revenues that should belong to the Syrian Arab Republic”. We as CHP also agree with this opposition and we would like to see the participants of the tripartite summit of July 1<sup>st</sup> to sincerely embrace it too.

## **ISIS**

- In this context, I would like to highlight and draw attention to a most recent report published by the International Crisis Group.
- The International Crisis Group (ICG) released a comprehensive report on June 29, on those who joined ISIS and have now returned to Turkey. Turkey is one of the leading sources of recruits for ISIS. About 9,000 people are estimated to have left Turkey to join the ranks of ISIS.



- Even though the recruits from Turkey, who used to play a role in making the organization more active in Syria and Iraq are now returning back to their countries, and thus making ISIS less active in the region; thousands of ISIS militants returning to our country still continue to pose a threat. Between 2014 and 2017, approximately 300 Turkish citizens have lost their lives in 16 attacks by ISIS.
- It is the responsibility of the government to punish and / or rehabilitate these returnees in a way that they will not pose a threat to our security.
- One of the findings of the report of the International Crisis Group states: "the current policies designed in the field, which are called "de-radicalization" or "rehabilitation" by the authorities, have generally vague goals and the efforts of the ministries remain uncoordinated. Social workers, police, imams, prison wardens and local officials lack specialized training on how to deal with returnees and their families, and the authorities who can play a guiding role in this field have not been assigned with clear tasks. Civil society actors are largely absent, and the officials are reluctant to cooperate with outsiders." This is an important finding.
- The report also mentions that some of the returnees in Turkey remain connected to the circles close to ISIS.
- Developments in Idlib could increase the threat posed by the Salafist-jihadist movements and particularly ISIS in our country in the near future. For that reason, I wanted to draw public attention to the ICG report and I hope that the authorities will read the findings of the report carefully and take the necessary steps to make our strategies to fight against ISIS more comprehensive.

## **Iraq**

- The last topic I would like to address in relation to our region and our neighbors is Iraq. After a long struggle, a government has finally been formed in Iraq. As you know, when this government was first formed, the fact that there was no Turkmen representative in it was received with a certain level of surprise. In this regard, the Iraqi parliament had assigned the Prime Minister with a duty. Our Chairperson had also expressed to the Iraqi Prime Minister our expectation that the Turkmen should have representation in the new Iraqi cabinet as soon as possible. We are glad to note and share with the public that the Iraqi Turkmen will now have a representative in the new Iraqi cabinet. This has been an extremely positive development.

## **Turkey-European Union Relations**

- What I want to talk about next is the Turkey-European Union relations. As you know on Monday, Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, paid a visit to Turkey. Within the framework of this visit, during the meetings held with Foreign Minister Mevlüt

Çavuşoğlu, it was revealed that both parties had clearly expressed their positions to each other and that the two sides agreed to disagree.

- As you know, Germany will take over the EU Presidency in the period between July 1-December 31, 2020. Germany is a very important actor in the EU who could actually be considered as the Union's engine.
- On the occasion of Germany's presidency, progress on EU-Turkey relations, which have suffered deep wounds in recent years, was expected particularly in the areas of customs union, migration and refugee policies. However, this expectation ended when Merkel announced that during the 2020-2021 period, the focus would be on addressing the Covid-19 crisis.
- Not only we have realized that we are not going to enter a new period in the EU relations, but we have also seen that with a unanimous decision, the European Union (EU) Commission announced on July 1<sup>st</sup> that it had reopened its borders to 14 non-Schengen countries in the context of the post-Covid-19 normalization process, and unfortunately, Turkey was not included in this list.
- The government not only wants to reduce the EU relations to the level of economic interests, but it also handles this issue as merely an issue of tourism.
- Before the pandemic, the government tried in a way to blackmail the EU by opening the borders to the refugees, but now it is trying hard to get tourists from the European Union to come to Turkey.
- The government cannot convince the EU that the necessary measures have been taken to deal with the pandemic, by gathering ambassadors in Antalya or by embarking on a European tour with the Minister of Tourism.
- This is a holistic issue that needs to be considered together with the reputation of our country, the situation of the shopkeepers in touristic areas as well as the family relations of our citizens living abroad. We would like to see that the efforts made for the arrival of tourists are also exhibited in the same way and as effectively, for our citizens and students who will travel to EU from Turkey.
- In fact some governments, such as the Dutch Government, advise their Turkish citizens "not to travel to Turkey for now, as family visit is not vital". Travel restriction is far from being merely an issue of tourism, but it is a multi-dimensional issue.
- For these problems to be solved and for Turkey to be a safe haven, we need to see a decrease in the number of Covid-19 cases in our country.
- As CHP, we would like to see Turkey embrace the entirety of EU values and engage in an effective cooperation in all fields.
- We would also like to underline that the ground for cooperation is based on mutual trust. Therefore, the government has the liability to restore the relation of mutual trust between the EU and Turkey as soon as possible.

### **Istanbul Convention**

- Distinguished Members of the Press, as you know, one of the pressing issues occupying the agenda concerns the Istanbul Convention. You might wonder

what this topic has to do with foreign policy. In deed, this issue is closely linked to international obligations and respect to international law. The full name of the convention that is known as the İstanbul Convention is the "Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence". With this convention, Turkey has signed the most effective legal instrument which is binding for our country in "stopping" violence against women.

- So much so that, the Law No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women has been codified within the framework of the provisions of this Convention.
- While Turkey was the first signatory and the host country to the Convention, and while the Convention is even called the İstanbul Convention, the fact that we are discussing today, after all this time, a possible withdrawal from the İstanbul Convention has driven everyone who opposes violence against women to a great despair.
- We would like to underline that, we do not find it right to withdraw from a convention that is recognized as the "Golden Standard" by the UN, during a period whereby we hear about new cases of violence against women from all segments of society.
- The Convention passed by our Parliament with the support of all political parties represented at the parliament at the time, is now being used by the government as an instrument in its cheap attempts to change the agenda.
- Major uncertainties will also arise if Turkey pulls out of the Convention. For instance, what will happen to the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers established by the Governorates as a requirement of the İstanbul Convention?
- Or, what will happen to the Law No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women? Are these going to be abolished?
- The government wants to pave the way for human rights violations by using as an excuse some words that represent concepts enshrined in all international conventions.
- We would like to remind once again that, every step taken without analyzing the root-causes of violence will cause many more women like Emine Bulut to be brutally deprived of their right to life.

Distinguished Members of the Press,

This was all that I wanted to dwell on today within the context of foreign policy and in the context of international law and our relations with the international community. If you have any questions, I am ready to answer them.

### **Q&A:**

- Question 1: What are your thoughts on the new appointment to the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality Secretary-General position?

- Answer: Distinguished Members of the Press, as you know, I held a press conference on foreign policy. If you have any questions about domestic policy issues, they will be answered by the other relevant representatives of our party who are in charge of this issue, such as our party spokesperson or our deputy chairperson for municipalities. I don't have any answers on that topic.
- Question 2: What did you mean when you said that no lessons were learned from Syria?
- Answer 2: We have been stressing from the very beginning that the problem in Syria should be solved by diplomacy and peaceful means and that hard power and military power should never be the priority choice. We lost many martyrs in Syria. Today once again, instead of carrying out the efforts for peace through diplomacy and by peaceful means, hard power is being used in Libya as well. That is exactly what I meant when I said that no lessons were learned from Syria. To avoid a similar situation in Libya, diplomacy and efforts for a peaceful solution should be given priority immediately. I already stated that the situation in Libya is escalating and the reciprocal attacks on the air bases will further grow into a much graver hot conflict if the escalation continues. That is why I wanted to remind once again the concerns we had over this.
- Question 3: Is Turkey acting together with the United States in Libya?
- Answer 3: An argument asserting that Turkey and the United States are moving together on Libya is not clearly on the table yet. In fact, it is not clear what the exact strategy of the United States is in Libya, just like it has been the case in Syria, Iraq, and the Middle East before. But what is clear and certain is that Turkey's foreign policy is constantly changing its direction, swinging like a pendulum between the United States and Russia. That is exactly what needs to be fixed. And we have been stating this for years now. Turkey should not pursue such a foreign policy swinging between the United States and Russia like a pendulum, and should instead engage in a dialogue in a way that it can express its own national interests to both the United States and Russia in the direction it desires. Any other questions? Thank you very much.