

A Selection of Environmental News from Turkey

Polen Ekoloji Bulletin July 2025

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At A Glance: Ecological Developments in July

Turkey witnessed a dramatic rise in wildfires and drought in July. There has been a growing resistance to the controversial Omnibus Bill, and intensifying local opposition to destructive mining and energy projects.

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On the Ground: A Selection of News

Widespread wildfires, state-backed deforestation, and legal battles over destructive mining projects marked July. Urgent nationalizations and controversial developments raised public concern over escalating ecological destruction.

I.

At A Glance: Ecological Developments in July

Wildfires and Droughts

July saw an alarming escalation in both wildfires and drought across Turkey, signaling the deepening impacts of climate change and environmental mismanagement.

At the start of the month, over [342 fires](#) broke out within five days, with inadequate state response sparking widespread criticism. Nationwide, more than [3,100 fires](#) were recorded in the first seven months of the year, a quarter of which occurred within just ten days. Public concern grew over possible causes, ranging from negligence to sabotage, with several arrests made but little transparency offered.

Meanwhile, drought conditions reached critical levels in several key ecosystems:

- [In Hatay](#), the Milleyha Bird Paradise dried up, destroying the habitat of over 300 bird species.
- [In Bursa](#), the Karasu Stream, which feeds Lake İznik, ran dry, threatening the region's agriculture.
- [Eber Lake](#) in Afyonkarahisar, once the twelfth largest in the country, has nearly vanished due to over-irrigation and climate stress, endangering both fishing and farming livelihoods.
- [In Şirnak](#), a 40-year-old man-made pond dried up under extreme heat, resulting in one of the region's largest recorded fish die-offs.
- [Yalova's Hersek Lagoon](#) also faced a dual threat of drought and mucilage, causing a sharp decline in bird populations and putting migratory pathways at risk.



Milleyha Bird Paradise, Hatay (BirGun)



Omnibus Bill

Widespread opposition mounted against the government's new Omnibus Bill, which grants expanded privileges to mining companies and threatens agricultural, forested, and communal lands across Turkey. In Muğla, [the bill endangers 48 villages](#), particularly those reliant on olive cultivation and farming, sparking fears of land dispossession and water contamination. [Protests intensified nationwide](#), with 64 organizations—including villagers and ecological groups—gathering in front of Parliament in Ankara to denounce the legislation. They warned that the bill would deepen poverty, displace rural communities, and exacerbate water scarcity. Legal professionals also raised alarm: [the Ankara Bar Association](#) labeled the law a “tragedy for environmental law,” citing its contradiction with climate goals and its revival of previously annulled provisions through unconstitutional means. Meanwhile, in the wake of the bill's passage, mining company [Tüpraş began exploratory activities](#) in the highlands of Rize, prompting immediate resistance from locals. Villagers from regions like Datça and Kınık joined [the outcry in Ankara](#), warning that the law enables the handover of pastures, forests, and farmland to corporations, calling for collective resistance against the ongoing assault on nature.

Energy Projects

In July, communities across Turkey mobilized against a wave of controversial energy projects, voicing growing concern over their environmental, social, and legal implications.

- In Şırnak, a series of dam and hydropower (HES) projects, including the Nerdüş and Hêzil streams, drew sharp opposition for threatening [agricultural lands, forests, and archaeological sites](#). Local residents, legal groups, and ecological organizations [filed official objections](#), warning that these developments—[many fast-tracked without proper environmental assessments](#)—would destroy ecosystems and displace entire villages.
- Similar protests erupted along Zorê Creek at the Diyarbakır-Bitlis border, where [residents marched against a planned HES project](#) that would devastate thousands of acres of farmland and forest, potentially emptying nearby villages.

Meanwhile, geothermal energy (GES) projects also came under fire:

- [In Mersin's Anamur district](#), villagers secured a legal victory as courts canceled two GES projects that threatened groundwater and biodiversity.
- [In Aydın's Germencik](#), resistance grew against three new geothermal plants planned dangerously close to residential areas and olive groves, with locals citing risks to both health and agriculture.

II. On the Ground: A Selection of News

The monthly Polen Ekoloji Bulletin in English comprises a selection of news on environmental destruction and environmentalist resistance from the more comprehensive monthly bulletin in Turkish. Both bulletins are available [here](#).

01.07.2025 - 26.07.2025

Wildfires

July 1: 342 wildfires broke out in Türkiye in 5 days: 6 of them are still being intervened

[Evrensel](#)

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry İbrahim Yumaklı has stated that 342 wildfires have broken out in the country since Friday, and 6 of them still are not under control.

July 6: 3.181 wildfires broke out in the last 7 months

[Mezopotamya News Agency](#)

The Directorate of Communications has announced that 1.351 wildfires and 1.830 other types of fires have broken out in Türkiye since the beginning of 2025; 25% of these have broken out in the last 10 days.

July 23: 61 Fires in 18 Days, 4 People Arrested

[Artı Gerçek](#)

Interior Minister Yerlikaya announced that 23 people were detained and 4 arrested in connection with 61 forest fires over the past 18 days. No details were shared about the causes of the fires, prompting public debate over possible negligence or sabotage.

July 26: Deadly Fire in Eskişehir Raises Suspicions

Eskişehir

[Mezopotamya News Agency](#)

A massive fire in Eskişehir that killed 10 people raised concerns about its connection to mining activities. Cevat Aydemir from the Eskişehir Ecology Association noted that 81% of the affected area had been designated as a mining zone. The association called on the government to provide a credible public explanation regarding the fire.

04.07.2025

Altınköy Cove in Urla faces closure threat: Shores cannot be sold

İzmir

[BirGün](#)

It has been revealed that Egeyapı Europe Real Estate Construction Undertaking Investment Joint Stock Company wants to rent the seashore for a full closure. It has been decided that it is against the law for the region, which has an agricultural value, and is registered as a forest with a court order, to become a site of construction.



Residents and firefighters attempt to extinguish a wildfire as smoke and flames rise from a forested area in Bursa © Onur Yurtsever, AFP.

09.07-21.07.2025
Omnibus Bill

July 9: The Bill Threatens 48 Villages in Muğla
Muğla

[Cumhuriyet](#)

The latest omnibus bill that is brought to the Turkish Parliament grants new privileges to mining companies seriously threatens 48 villages and their means of livelihood in Muğla. If the bill becomes law, olive groves and other agricultural lands will be opened for mining activities. Environmental organizations and the local public are outraged that this bill will pave the way for ecological destruction and demolish their homeland. They also underline that this bill has rulings in favor of mining companies and ignores public welfare.

July 16: Protesters at the Parliament in Ankara

[Mezopotamya News Agency](#)

64 organizations, environmentalists and peasants, organized a rally next to the Parliament against the new omnibus bill. Protesters emphasized that the new law would destroy the land, water sources, livelihoods, olive groves, and displace villagers.

July 21: Ankara Bar Association: “Scientific Processes Coherent with the Climate Law Must Be Re-initiated”

[Sendika](#)

The Environmental and Urban Law Commission of the Ankara Bar Association calls President Erdoğan to reject the omnibus bill. The Bar statement emphasizes that this bill, passed so hastily in 10 days, is overtly against Turkey’s “Net-Zero by 2053” goal. The omnibus bill revitalizes subsidies for lignite mining, boosts emissions by increasing coal consumption, and bringing back the contentious mining bill that had been cancelled by the State Council. The Bar Association calls for transparent, scientific, and participatory processes that would result in regulations in harmony with the Climate Law.



Villagers from Muğla on hunger strike against the Omnibus Bill (MuğlaHaber)

10.07.2025

Triumph of the villagers in Anamur!

Mersin

[BirGün](#)

Two projects of mining and energy companies, which wanted to encircle important agricultural and touristic regions have been cancelled by the court.

11.07.2025

Dynamites will be laid down under 5.000 trees

Aydın

[BirGün](#)

Doğanlar Mining has started an Environmental Impact Assessment process in Aydın's Karpuzlu region, at the foothill of Latmos Mountains, to open a new feldspar mine. Their plan is to carry out an open mine method, detonating it with dynamites.

16.07.2025

Mountains resisted, jurisdiction cancelled

Aydın

[BirGün](#)

The State Council annulled the "Environmental Impact Assessment not needed" decision for the feldspar mining project of Dinçler Mining company. Advocates for life have won!

22.07.2025

Captured Stray Dogs Died Due To Heat

İzmir

[ETHA](#)

Some of the stray dogs which had been captured in Dikili, İzmir and located in shelters with insufficient shade, fresh air and water died from heat stroke. This reanimated debates around the "massacre law" enacted last year, which requires municipalities to remove millions of stray dogs from the streets.

23.07.2025

The Government Wages War Against Nature

[Evrensel](#)

Urgent nationalization, an exceptional method that governments adopt during wars or natural disasters, has become a routine practice during the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government with the distinct purpose of creating profits and rent for private corporations. Since the AKP came to power in 2002, a total of 2537 plots of land have been subjected to urgent nationalization, and put to the service of corporations seeking additional profits.

24.07.2025

New Lawsuit Against the Cement Factory

Muğla

[Mezopotamya News Agency](#)

The planned cement factory in the Deştin and Bayır counties of Muğla was granted a positive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change twice, and in both cases the administrative court annulled the decision. Yet the project received a positive EIA report for the third time, and the local population is taking the case to the court for the third time.

03.07-23.07.2025

Deforestation in Şırnak

July 3: Deforestation on Gabar Mountain Continues for the Fifth Year

[Yeni Yaşam](#)

Systematic deforestation continues under military oversight in the Gabar and Cudi mountains. Logging operations, conducted by village guards, have expanded to districts like Uludere and Beytüşşebap, and are justified on the grounds of "security."

July 5: Thousands of Trees Burned in Wildfire

[Yeni Yaşam](#)

A wildfire broke out in a forested area of Gabar Mountain. Thousands of trees and numerous animals were lost in the fire, which occurred in a restricted military zone.

July 14: 270 Tons of Wood Cut Daily Under Military Oversight

[Yeni Yaşam](#)

Ecological destruction in Şırnak is escalating due to mining, hydropower projects, and deforestation. In Gabar alone, an estimated 270 tons of wood are cut daily under military supervision.

July 23: Tree Cutting Continues as Forest Entry Ban Announced

[Yeni Yaşam](#) & [Mezopotamya News Agency](#)

Hundreds of oak trees were felled in Gabar on the same day the Şırnak Governor's Office imposed a forest entry ban until September 1, citing wildfire risks. Locals criticized the ban as ironic, as state-backed deforestation in the same areas continues unabated.

