

# National Sovereignty and Children's Day in Turkey

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*Solemn ceremonies and children's festivals take place throughout Turkey on National Sovereignty and Children's Day, held on April 23 each year.*

*Children take seats in the Turkish Parliament and symbolically govern the country for one day.*



Many people in Turkey commemorate the first gathering of the Grand National Assembly (the Turkish Parliament), which took place on April 23, 1920, by attending local ceremonies or laying wreaths at monuments of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. The biggest ceremony takes place at the Ataturk Mausoleum in Ankara.

Because Ataturk reportedly dedicated the Turkish Republic to children, Turkish schoolchildren take seats in the Parliament for the day and symbolically govern the country. They elect a president who then addresses

**the country on national television. Children's festivals take place throughout the country. The state-run Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) brings children, aged eight to 14, from different countries around the world to Turkey. These children stay with Turkish families for a week and participate in children's festivals, which culminate in a gala-performance on April 23.**



## Public Life

National Sovereignty and Children's Day is an official holiday in Turkey. Government offices, schools and most businesses are closed on this day. Public transport routes may vary in the event of street performances.



## Background

The first gathering of the Turkish Grand National Assembly took place on April 23, 1920, during Turkey's War of Independence (1919-1923). Mustafa Kemal Atatürk proclaimed the parliament an important step toward building a new state after the Ottoman Empire was defeated during World War I. Atatürk reportedly dedicated the Turkish Republic to children in Turkey.

Turkey officially celebrated Grand National Assembly Day on April 23 and held a children's week starting on that day, from 1923–1934. The Turkish government then combined the two events into National Sovereignty and Children's Day in 1935. Turkish Radio and Television Corporation has been organizing international children's festivals, held during the week of April 23, since 1979.

## Symbols

The most common symbols of National Sovereignty and Children's Day are:

- A globe or a circle, symbolizing the world.
- A group of children holding hands, symbolizing unity.
- The Turkish flag, symbolizing Turkish statehood.

These symbols are commonly seen on National Sovereignty and Children's Day in Turkey.

