

Yılmaz Özdil wrote: Why isn't Zeydan Öncü's A400M firefighting kit being used during forest fires?

Journalist Yılmaz Özdil described the lack of active use of the domestically developed firefighting kit by Turkish engineer Zeydan Öncü for the A400M aircraft—as a "lack of foresight"—despite Turkey having 10 A400M planes in its inventory.



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EDİTÖR

30.07.2025 - 14:47
Published



In his column for Sözcü newspaper, Yılmaz Özdil highlighted Turkey's lack of night-vision-equipped helicopters and brought attention to engineer Zeydan Öncü's firefighting solution. Özdil's article underscored the absence of forward-thinking governance and raised the question of why Turkey has failed to utilize the potential already at its disposal.

Turkey's Greatest Shortcoming in Forest Fires: Night-Vision Aerial Vehicles

One of the most critical shortcomings in Turkey's response to the frequent summer forest fires is the lack of night-vision aerial vehicles. As soon as night falls, firefighting operations become significantly more difficult, making the uncontrolled spread of flames almost inevitable.

Helicopters and aircraft equipped with night-vision technology can operate using infrared systems, allowing them to detect targets even in complete darkness. However, the near-total absence of such systems in Turkey severely hampers the time-sensitive nature of effective wildfire response.

The system developed by Zeydan Öncü transforms A400M aircraft into firefighting vehicles.

The specialized equipment developed by Turkish engineer Zeydan Öncü can rapidly convert the A400M military transport aircraft into an effective firefighting plane. After working at Airbus for many years, Öncü established his own venture and secured a global patent for this system.

The equipment can be installed on the aircraft in just two hours and is capable of discharging 20 tons of water onto a target from low altitude in only eight seconds. This capacity is five times greater than that of the current firefighting aircraft in use in Turkey.



Turkey has A400M aircraft, but why isn't this system being used?

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Airbus's A400M: From War Technology to Environmental Protection

The four-engine A400M aircraft, capable of carrying 40 tons of cargo, are advanced defense vehicles designed to operate in challenging weather conditions. This technological infrastructure also makes them effective in civilian applications.

Adapted for firefighting missions, these planes stand out with their rapid response capability and high-volume water release over large areas. Additionally, after firefighting operations, the aircraft can return to transport duties.

European countries show interest in Zeydan Öncü's system

The firefighting system developed by Zeydan Öncü for A400M aircraft, which are also operated by countries like France, Germany, and the UK, is attracting significant attention. The French government has made an offer to Öncü for producing this technology domestically.

France currently has 20 A400M planes and is in the process of ordering 30 more. These countries aim to deploy a system with superior maneuverability, night operation capability, and large water-carrying capacity to combat fires.

The limited capacity of existing firefighting vehicles is exacerbating the fires.

Most firefighting planes used in Turkey can carry only 4 tons of water. Additionally, since these vehicles lack night-vision systems, they become inoperative after dark. This situation especially contributes to the expansion of fires in rural and mountainous areas.

Antonov-type aircraft face technical disadvantages such as having to release water from high altitudes, causing the water to evaporate before reaching the ground. This issue leads to wasted human effort due to the lack of adequate technological infrastructure.

Why hasn't Turkey's potential been utilized?

Despite being developed with local materials and Turkish engineering at a low cost, Zeydan Öncü's system is still not actively used in Turkey. Yet, this system can convert existing A400M aircraft into firefighting vehicles in just two hours.

While the technical infrastructure, human resources, and production capacity exist, the failure to deploy the system raises the question in public discourse: "Is there a lack of vision in decision-making processes?" Özdil's article, emphasizing the need for "foresight" before night vision, serves as a striking warning at this point.