

Detailed Biography

The architect of Türkiye's first indigenous (armed) UAV systems and first indigenous unmanned fighter jet, Bayraktar KIZILELMA, Selçuk Bayraktar serves as Baykar's Chairman and Chief Technology Officer as well as Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the T3 Foundation, the Culture and Civilization Foundation and Cansağlığı Foundation.

Upon completing his primary education at Sarıyer Elementary, Bayraktar graduated from the prestigious Robert College in 1997 and received his bachelor's degree in Electronics and Communication Engineering from Istanbul Technical University in 2002. He proceeded to earn his first master's degree from UPenn's Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering in 2004. His groundbreaking research on UAV formation flights, the coordination of aerial and ground robot teams, and flight control and guidance systems has since become the subject of scientific publications.

Upon completing the master's program at UPenn, Bayraktar received an offer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to pursue graduate and doctoral degrees there with full funding. During his time at MIT, he studied automatic flight control algorithms which would enable unmanned helicopter systems to perform aggressive maneuvers. Having received his second master's degree in Aerospace Engineering from MIT in 2006, he began to pursue his PhD at Georgia Tech yet returned to Türkiye the following year to resume Baykar's efforts to develop unmanned aerial vehicle technologies.

Selçuk Bayraktar's work at Baykar focuses on the avionics architecture of indigenous UAV systems, the development of flight control and cruise algorithms, system kinematics and dynamics, and electronic equipment and embedded software.

At Baykar, Bayraktar previously led the team that developed the Bayraktar Mini UAV, Türkiye's first indigenous drone, and the Bayraktar TB2 (armed) UAV, which experts have described as the world's best drone in its class. Having operated for more than 950,000 flight hours, the Bayraktar TB2 has been exported to 34 countries as of October 2024. Bayraktar and his team also developed the Bayraktar AKINCI UCAV, Türkiye's first combat drone with a maximum takeoff weight of 6 tons, delivered it to the Turkish Armed Forces in 2021, and exported it to 10 countries by October 2024.

Selçuk Bayraktar currently leads the teams developing Cezeri, Türkiye's first flying car prototype, as well as the Bayraktar TB3 armed UAV, which will be capable of taking off from and landing on short-runway carriers, and the Bayraktar KIZILELMA, Türkiye's first unmanned fighter jet that completed its maiden flight on 14 Dec. 2022 – ahead of the original target of 2023.

As part of the development efforts led by Bayraktar, the Bayraktar KIZILELMA successfully conducted formation flights, for the first time in global aviation history, as two combat UAVs, AKINCI UCAV and KIZILELMA Unmanned Fighter Jet, completed multiple close formation flights – another unprecedented achievement.

Bayraktar also focuses on space with his technology venture, Fergani Space Technologies, where he oversees the development of low-orbit satellite clusters and orbital transfer vehicles.

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, Selçuk Bayraktar led Türkiye's efforts to build indigenous intensive care ventilators, which was ultimately co-produced by BIOSYS, BAYKAR, ASELSAN and ARÇELİK and exported or gifted to countries around the world. He also continues his work with the CANSAĞLIĞI Foundation, which he founded and where he serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, to support scientific projects on genetics, immunology and rare diseases and to promote individual and public health.

Selçuk Bayraktar was awarded the Order of Karabakh by President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan on 1 April 2021 in recognition of the Bayraktar TB2 armed UAV's contributions to Karabakh's liberation. He also received the State Order of Merit on orders from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in 2022.

Having received the Medal of Military Cooperation from Azerbaijani Defense Minister Zakir Hasanov on 4 April 2023, Bayraktar was awarded the Azerbaijani Medal of Service to Citizens and Social Innovations Agency (ASAN Hizmet), which recognizes individuals for their contributions to the country, on 2 October 2023 per the Azerbaijani Presidency's decision.

On 18 October 2023, Selçuk Bayraktar received the National Order of Mali, the country's highest honor, for his contributions and service to Mali by President Assimi Goita.

On February 28, 2024, he was awarded the "1st Degree Order of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine" by the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine for his significant contributions to Ukraine's national security and defense, and for enhancing its defense capabilities under martial law.

On October 9, 2024, he was honored with the 'Kyrgyzstan Dank State Order' by Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov for his contributions to the country's defense capacity and military potential.

The T3 Foundation, where Bayraktar serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, supports enterprises, research and projects focusing on strategically important products, systems and components whose indigenous production bears importance due to global competition. Bayraktar leads the Foundation's scientific efforts as Chairman of the Board of Trustees to realize Türkiye's National Technology Initiative vision. Together with his team and stakeholders, he hosts TEKNOFEST, Türkiye's first and only aerospace and technology festival, to spread his passion for aviation and space with the entire population, which he considers crucial for the National Technology Initiative. TEKNOFEST took place in Azerbaijan in 2022 – a reflection of its growing impact beyond Türkiye's borders.

Additionally, he serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Culture and Civilization Foundation, which he established to promote the holistic analysis of the history of human civilization and the development of solutions to contemporary social issues with the help of ancient values.

Selçuk Bayraktar married Sümeyye Erdoğan Bayraktar in 2016. The couple has two children. Selçuk holds a private pilot license.