

Selçuk Bayraktar / Chairman of the Board and Chief Technology Officer, Baykar

Short Biography

The architect of Türkiye's first indigenous (armed) UAV systems and first indigenous unmanned fighter jet, Bayraktar KIZILELMA, Selçuk Bayraktar was born in Sarıyer, Istanbul in 1979.

Having graduated from the prestigious Robert College in 1997, Bayraktar 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 and conducted groundbreaking research on UAV formation flights and robot coordination. Bayraktar subsequently worked on automatic flight control algorithms for unmanned helicopter systems during his graduate and doctoral studies at MIT, where he received his second master's degree in 2006. He returned to Türkiye the following year to resume Baykar's efforts to develop unmanned aerial vehicle technologies.

Selçuk Bayraktar has been serving as Baykar's Chief Technology Officer since 2007 and Chairman of the Board since 2021. His work at the company 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, Selçuk Bayraktar 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 to date, the Bayraktar TB2 has been exported to 34 countries as of October 2024. Bayraktar also developed the Bayraktar AKINCIUCAV, Türkiye's first combat drone with a maximum takeoff weight of six 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 able to take off from and land on short-runway carriers, and the Bayraktar KIZILELMA, Türkiye's first unmanned fighter jet which completed its maiden flight on 14 December 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 the history of global aviation, as two combat UAVs, AKINCIUCAV and KIZILELMA Unmanned Fighter Jet, completed multiple close formation flights – another unprecedented achievement.

Selçuk 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, Bayraktar led Türkiye's efforts to build indigenous intensive care ventilators – which were ultimately co-produced by BIOSYS, BAYKAR, ASELSAN and ARÇELİK, and exported or donated to many countries around the world. He also continues his

work with the CANSAGLIGI 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.

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

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 talented young people with the potential to develop indigenous and original technology and holds training sessions. Spearheading the National Technology Initiative, the T3 Foundation hosts TEKNOFEST, the world's largest aerospace and technology event. TEKNOFEST took place in Azerbaijan in 2022 – a reflection of its growing impact beyond Türkiye's borders.

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