



Politics of Turkey

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Turkey's political system: Overview

- ▶ Politics of Turkey are exercised in frame of strictly secular parliamentary representative democratic republic, by which PM is both head of government and head of multi-party system.
- ▶ President of Turkey is head of state who holds largely solemn role, but with substantial reserve powers.
- ▶ Turkish political system is modeled off separation of powers.
- ▶ Council of Ministers exercise executive power.
- ▶ Grand National Assembly of Turkey holds legislative power.
- ▶ Judiciary is free of executive and legislature.
- ▶ Turkey's current constitution went into effect on 7 November 1982 after the country held constitutional referendum.



Executive branch

- ▶ Duty of head of state is carried out by president (*Cumhurbaşkanı*).
- ▶ President is elected every five years on basis of universal suffrage according to current constitution.
- ▶ President is not required to be MP, but he or she has to be older than 40 years old and have bachelor's degree.
- ▶ Current president Abdullah Gül was elected by Parliament on 28 August 2007.
- ▶ President, PM (*Başbakan*) and Council of Ministers are in charge of executive power (Cabinet Erdoğan III).
- ▶ Ministers are not required to be MPs, a recent example being Kemal Derviş.
- ▶ PM is nominated by President and confirmed by vote of confidence (*güvenoyu*) in Parliament.
- ▶ Current PM is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, whose conservative Justice and Development Party gained majority of parliament seats in 2011 general election.



Legislative branch

- ▶ Legislative power is exercised in 550-seat Grand National Assembly of Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*), with 81 provinces represented.
- ▶ Its members are elected to term of four years through mitigated proportional representation with election threshold of 10%.
- ▶ To secure representation in Parliament, a party needs to acquire at least 10% of national vote in national parliamentary election.
- ▶ Independent candidates may run in elections; to be elected, they also need to gain 10% of the vote in the province from which they are running.
- ▶ The threshold is set to be lowered.
- ▶ Current Speaker of Parliament is Cemil Çiçek.



Grand National Assembly of Turkey

- ▶ Normally known simply as the *Meclis* (parliament).
- ▶ Unicameral Turkish legislature.
- ▶ Single body given legislative privileges by Turkish Constitution.
- ▶ Founded 23 April 1920 amid Turkish War of Independence.
- ▶ Was essential in attempts of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his associates to establish new state out of what remained of Ottoman Empire in aftermath of World War I.
- ▶ 550 members of parliament (deputies) are elected to four-year term by D'Hondt method, party-list proportional representation system, from 85 electoral districts representing Turkey's 81 administrative provinces (Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, is split into three electoral districts while the capital, Ankara, and İzmir are split into two each due to their large populations).
- ▶ To prevent hung parliament and its inordinate political fragmentation, only those parties that obtain 10% of votes cast in national parliamentary election earn the right to parliament representation; as a result of this threshold, only two parties achieved that advantage during 2002 election, and later three in 2007.
- ▶ This rather high threshold has been criticized internationally, but a complaint filed with European Court of Human Rights was rejected.
- ▶ Independent candidates are permitted to run and can be elected if they meet threshold.



Political laws of truth in Turkey

- ▶ Turkey's constitution and most mainstream political parties are structured on these principles:
 - ▶ Kemalism
 - ▶ Laicism
 - ▶ Modernization
- ▶ Other political ideas have also influenced Turkish politics and modern history. Of special significance are:
 - ▶ Conservatism
 - ▶ Neo-liberalism
 - ▶ Islamism
 - ▶ Pan-Turkism
 - ▶ Socialism
 - ▶ Communism
 - ▶ Anarchism
- ▶ These laws are continuum around which diverse – and frequently altering – political parties and groups have campaigned (and occasionally fought). On superficial level, significance which state officials attach to these laws and their posts can be seen in reaction to violation of protocol in formal observances.



Parties represented in current Parliament

- ▶ Justice and Development Party
(*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP)
- ▶ Republican People's Party
(*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP)
- ▶ Nationalist Movement Party
(*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP)
- ▶ Peace and Democracy Party
(*Bariş ve Demokrasi Partisi*, BDP)
- ▶ Participatory Democracy Party
(*Katılımcı Demokrasi Partisi*, KADEP)



Government of Turkey

- ▶ Capital: Ankara
- ▶ Largest city: Istanbul
- ▶ Official language(s): Turkish
- ▶ Government: Parliamentary republic
- ▶ Founder: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk
- ▶ President: Abdullah Gül
- ▶ Prime Minister: Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
- ▶ Speaker of the Parliament: Cemil Çiçek
- ▶ President of the Constitutional Court: Haşim Kılıç



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

- ▶ Born 19 May 1881 in Salonica, Ottoman Empire (present-day Thessaloniki, Greece).
- ▶ Died 10 November 1938 (aged 57) at Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul.
- ▶ Ottoman and Turkish army officer, revolutionary statesman, writer, and first President of Turkey from 29 October 1923 until his death on 10 November 1938.
- ▶ Credited with founding modern Republic of Turkey.
- ▶ His last name means “Father of the Turks” and it was given to him (and prohibited to any other person) by Turkish parliament in 1934.
- ▶ Was military officer in World War I.
- ▶ Led Turkish national movement in Turkish War of Independence.
- ▶ Overcame forces sent by Allies by instituting provisional government; his military campaigns won Turkey independence.
- ▶ Subsequently embarked upon plan of political, economic, and cultural reforms, trying to turn former Ottoman Empire into modern, westernized, and secular nation-state.
- ▶ The laws of his reforms, which lay the foundation of modern-day Turkey, are known as Kemalism.



Abdullah Gül

- ▶ Born 29 October 1950 in Kayseri.
- ▶ 11th and current President of Turkey since 28 August 2007.
- ▶ Was previously PM for four months (18 November 2002-14 March 2003) and Minister of Affairs and Deputy PM for four years (14 March 2003-28 August 2007 and 28 March 2003-28 August 2007, respectively).
- ▶ PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's appointment of Gül as presidential candidate attracted strong and highly vocal opposition from passionate advocates of secularism in Turkey; his attempt for presidency was denied in May 2007 because of fears of views he stated during his Welfare Party years, and the fact that his wife, Hayrünnisa, wears a headscarf.
- ▶ After July 2007 general election, which Justice and Development won by receiving 46.6% of popular vote, he was elected President on 28 August 2007; assumed office same day, and became the first devout Muslim President in Turkey's modern history.



Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

- ▶ Born 26 February 1954 in Istanbul.
- ▶ PM of Turkey since 14 March 2003 and chairman of governing party Justice and Development Party (AK Parti), which has majority of seats in Grand National Assembly of Turkey.
- ▶ Served as Mayor of Istanbul from 1994-1998, having been elected in 27 March 1994 local election.
- ▶ Graduated from Marmara University's Faculty of Economics and Commercial Sciences in 1981.
- ▶ Was also semi-professional football player from 1969-1982.
- ▶ Was barred from office and sentenced to prison term for narrating poem in public address in province of Siirt in 1997; the poem was asserted to be quoted from a book issued by state enterprise and one that was suggested to teachers by Ministry of Education.
- ▶ Founded Justice and Development (AK Party) in 2001; from that year, AK Party became dominating publicly-backed political movement in Turkey.
- ▶ Acquired two-thirds of seats in parliament in 2002 general election, creating first single-party government for nine years.
- ▶ Carried out numerous reforms as PM.
- ▶ 45 years after Turkey concluded Association Agreement with EU, talks for Turkey's accession to the EU began under his tenure; next to this, inflation, which had affected the Turkish economy adversely, was brought under control and Turkish Lira recovered its former status by elimination of six zeros.
- ▶ His tenure also saw interest rates lowered, with per capita growing significantly.
- ▶ AK party won 2007 general election, the first time in 52 years that a ruling party had strengthened its votes for second term; it was re-elected for third term in 2011 general election and Erdoğan stayed PM.



Cemil Çiçek

- ▶ Born 15 November 1946 in Yozgat.
- ▶ Current Speaker of Parliament of Turkey since 4 July 2011.
- ▶ Served as Deputy PM of Turkey and Justice and Development Party MP from Ankara.
- ▶ Formerly Minister of Justice and government spokesman.
- ▶ Attended Law Faculty of Istanbul University.
- ▶ Joined centre-right ANAP in 1983; became ANAP MP for Yozgat and Minister of State responsible for “the family” in late 1980s.
- ▶ In his role as Minister of State, he was known for his conservative beliefs on issues of sex and marriage.



Haşim Kılıç

- ▶ Born 13 March 1950 in Çiçekdağı, Kırşehir.
- ▶ High-ranked judge and President of Constitutional Court of Turkey since 22 October 2007.
- ▶ Born in Hacı Hasanlı of Çiçekdağı district of Kırşehir Province in Turkey.
- ▶ Enrolled in Eskişehir Academy of Economics and Commerce in 1968, graduating in 1972.
- ▶ Served as financial inspector at Court of Auditors of Turkey, a high judicial body, according to Constitution of Turkey, from 1974-1985.
- ▶ Elected as member of Board of Court of Auditors of Turkey, a post he held for five years.
- ▶ Nominated as judge of Constitutional Court by then-President Turgut Özal on 7 December 1990; was elected twice as deputy president of court on 7 December 1999 and 7 December 2003.
- ▶ Married to Gönül Kılıç; they have four children.



Justice and Development Party

- ▶ Centre-right conservative political party.
 - ▶ Biggest party in Turkey; has 327 MPs.
 - ▶ Its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is PM; fellow member and ex-party leader Abdullah Gül is President.
 - ▶ *Ak* also means “white” in Turkish.
 - ▶ Founded 14 August 2001 by members of numerous existing parties; won landslide victory in 2002 general election by winning more than two-thirds of parliamentary seats.
 - ▶ Abdullah Gül became PM, but constitutional amendment adopted in 2003 permitted Erdoğan to replace him.
 - ▶ Increased its share of vote to 47% in early 2007 general election held in July, losing its number of seats to 341, but Erdoğan nonetheless came back as PM, while Gül was elected to presidency.
 - ▶ Additionally increased its portion of popular vote to 49.8%, acquiring 327 parliamentary seats to form third-consecutive majority government in general election held 12 June 2011.
 - ▶ Depicts itself as pro-Western party in Turkey’s political spectrum that is supporter of conservative social agenda and liberal market economy that includes Turkish membership in EU.
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- ▶ Offered observer membership in European People’s Party, in 2005.



Republican People's Party

- ▶ Kemalist and social-democratic political party.
- ▶ Is Turkey's oldest political party and is currently main opposition party in Grand National Assembly.
- ▶ Portrays itself as “a modern social-democratic party, which is faithful to founding principles and values of the Republic [of Turkey]”.
- ▶ Also credited as “the founding party of modern Turkey”.
- ▶ Founded during Congress of Sivas as alliance of resistance groups in opposition to invasion of Anatolia; the association represented Turkish people as united front in Turkish War of Independence.
- ▶ Officially declared itself as political organization on 9 September 1923; announced birth of Turkish Republic on 29 October 1923.
- ▶ Renamed itself to “Republican People's Party” (CHP) on 10 November 1924 as Turkey moved into single-party period.
- ▶ Became main political organization of single-party state during single-party period, despite being challenged by two opposition parties: Progressive Republican Party (founded in 1924 by some famous generals including Kâzım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy of Turkish War of Independence) and Liberal Republican Party established by Ali Fethi Okyar in 1930; both were forbidden within only a few months of their founding by the “single-party state”, and this experience was followed by National Development Party, established by Nuri Demirağ, in 1945.



Ankara



Istanbul



THE END (Sonunda)

