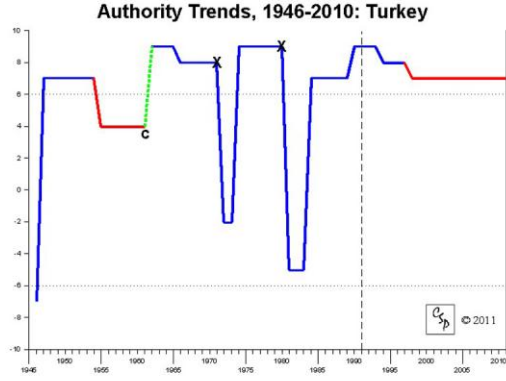


## Polity IV Country Report 2010: Turkey

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Polity:</b></td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Democ:</b></td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Autoc:</b></td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Durable:</b></td> <td colspan="3">27</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tentative:</b></td> <td colspan="3">No</td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	<b>Polity:</b>	7	7	0	<b>Democ:</b>	8	8	0	<b>Autoc:</b>	1	1	0	<b>Durable:</b>	27			<b>Tentative:</b>	No			
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SCODE	<b>TUR</b>	CCODE	<b>640</b>	Date of Report	<b>1 July 2011</b>																				
<b>Polity IV Component Variables</b>																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	3	4	7	3	3																				
<b>Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)</b>																									
End Date		6 November 1983		Begin Date																					
				7 November 1983																					
<b>Polity Fragmentation: No</b>																									
<b>Constitution</b>	1982																								
<b>Executive(s)</b>	Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan (AKP); selected by the dominant party or coalition in the Grand National Assembly, March 2003; reappointed July 2007 President Abdullah Gül (AKP); elected by parliament, 28 August 2007, 61.6%																								
<b>Legislature</b>	Unicameral: Grand National Assembly (550 seats; proportionally elected with 10% threshold; most recent election, 12 June 2011) Justice and Development Party (AKP): 326 Republican People's Party (CHP): 135 Nationalist Movement Party (MHP): 53 Non-partisans: 36																								
<b>Judiciary</b>	Council of State																								

### Narrative Description:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)**

While Turkey is a competitive multiparty democracy, nevertheless, the military continues to exercise substantial, albeit often indirect, influence over executive recruitment. The power of the military is reflected most recently by their successful efforts to force the resignation of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan (leader of the Islamic Refah Party) in 1997. Although military troops never actually left the barracks, this “virtual” or “postmodern” coup resulted in the collapse of a democratically elected

<sup>1</sup> The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

government and its replacement by one more amendable to military goals and influence. The continued role of the military in “guiding,” although not directly controlling, the political system means that some of the most important functions of the executive branch, most specifically internal security, are held by non-elected officials. Under the authority of Article 118, the National Security Council (composed of military officers and sympathetic civilians) work as a kind of shadow government. The National Security Council makes “recommendations” to the government that, as the departure of Prime Minister Erdogan vividly illustrates, elected politicians ignore at their own peril. However, in the last few years the political power of the armed forces has been whittled down. The National Security Council now contains more elected civilians and the civilian government can now audit military accounts. While the armed forces can still exert significant political influence if it chooses, it no longer seems as willing or capable of dominating the political arena as it has in the past. The military, despite voicing its reservations, acquiesced to the appointment of the Islamic AKP leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan as prime minister in March 2003. It was more reluctant, however, to accept the election of the AKP-candidate, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül to replace secularist President Ahmet Necdet Sezer; the presidency had traditionally been held by a secularist figurehead.

The secularist opposition boycotted ballots in the Grand National Assembly in April and May 2007 to prevent Gül’s election by rendering the Assembly inquorate; mass demonstrations in favor of preserving Turkey’s secular state were also held. Constitutional amendments were then promulgated to take the presidential election away from the legislature and make it a direct, popular election (provisions that reduced the president’s term from seven to five years, but allowing for a second term, and reduced the parliamentary term from five to four years were also included). President Sezer vetoed the reforms, forcing them to be put to a public referendum. The crisis provoked the calling of early elections in July 2007 in which the AKP increased its share of the vote from 34.3% to 46.6%. In light of the strong public support, the AKP again forwarded Gül as their candidate for president but he failed to receive the required two-thirds majority vote in the first two attempts. However, constitutional provisions reduce the two-thirds majority requirement to a simple majority if no candidate gains office in the first two votes. With the main opposition CHP boycotting the vote, Gül gained election to the presidency on the third ballot with 339 votes (61.6%) and was sworn in the same day: 28 August 2007. The constitutional referendum establishing direct presidential elections passed on 17 October 2007 with 69% voting for approval.

In parliamentary elections held 12 June 2011, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won nearly 50% of the popular vote; as a result, the AKP became the majority party in parliament with nearly 60% of the seats in the Grand National Assembly and Prime Minister Erdogan became the first prime minister in Turkey’s history to win three consecutive elections, each time receiving a greater share of the vote.

#### **Executive Constraints: Executive Parity or Subordination (7)**

Turkey is a parliamentary democracy in which the prime minister is beholden to the Grand National Assembly for political support. Coalition governments are the rule rather than the exception in Turkey. The president and the judiciary also serve to limit the powers of the prime minister. For example, in July 2000 the legislature passed a law that gave the prime minister the right to make decisions by decree. President Sezer refused to sign many of these decrees, including one which would have permitted the firing of thousands of civil servants accused of associating with radical Islamists, and in October 2000 the constitutional court declared this law to be illegal. While the judiciary is largely autonomous from the Government, it is often subjected to the influence of the armed forces.

#### **Political Participation: Factional/Restricted Competition (6)**

Politics in Turkey has two faces. One face is that of a constitutional democracy in which political parties from all ideological positions actively compete, and often win, positions of institutional power. The second face is that of a military-dominated political system which seeks to maintain the secularism and civic nationalism of the Turkish state through influence, intimidation and, in the case of the Kurdish PKK, the use of overt repression. While the Government does not directly forbid membership in any political organization, nonetheless, the military has influenced the courts to close down specific parties (e.g., the left-wing Socialist Party, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, the Islamist Refah Party, etc) for unconstitutional (albeit not undemocratic) activities. Moreover, since the late 1990s the Government has enacted laws that directly limit the ability of Islamists to organize without officially banning them. Human rights violations remain a serious problem in Turkey, particularly when it comes to the Kurdish population. While for all

practical purposes the PKK-led separatist war came to an end in 1999, the military continues to use repression against Kurdish political activists and civilians. Given this dual nature of the Turkish polity, and the intensity of the antagonisms within the body politic, political participation in Turkey is best described as being factional in nature.

Historically, the secularist forces in government have attempted to manage this factionalism through systematic restrictions on the ability of Kurds to organize politically and that of the Islamists to influence public policy. However, in recent years this strategy has become increasingly less effective. In April 2007 tens of thousands of supporters of secularism rallied in Ankara, aiming to pressure Prime Minister Erdogan not to run in the upcoming presidential elections because of his Islamist background. The ruling AKP decided to put forward Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul as its candidate for president after Erdogan decided to withdraw his candidacy. In the spring of 2007 the main secular opposition boycotted two attempts by the AKP-dominated parliament to elect Gul as president. The secular parties accused Gul of having a hidden Islamist agenda. The Constitutional Court declared the presidential vote invalid because the boycotts meant there was no quorum during the votes. In response to the decision of the Constitutional Court, the AK passed a bill in parliament that would allow the president to be directly elected. This bill was vetoed by President Sezer in May 2007. In preparation for the July 2007 general elections, the two secularist parties, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Democratic Left Party (DSP), formed an alliance to challenge the Islamist-rooted AKP. In response, Prime Minister Erdogan said he is willing to defend the secular state, and rebuked accusations by the opposition on this matter, saying, "To talk of revolutions, military coups and Sharia law is to do an injustice to our government and our people. We have been in power for four and a half years. Why suddenly these rumours of coups and Sharia law?"

While the AKP is a descendent of the banned Welfare Party, which saw Turkey as part of the Islamic world and opposed Turkish membership in the European Union, one would be hard pressed to see it as part of an Islamist vanguard. Most noticeably, since coming to power in 2002 the AK has actively sought to bring Turkey closer to EU membership and has made a point not to provoke secularists in either the government or the armed forces. However, while the secularist forces could accept a prime minister with Islamist roots, the election of an AKP member to the office of president was viewed as a completely different matter. Under the terms of the Turkish constitution, the president is also the chief of the armed forces. The secularist forces in Turkey continue to see the armed forces as the last line of defense against religious influence in government and society.

In May 2007 the National Assembly pushed forward the national elections to 22 July in an effort to end the standoff between secularists and Islamists over the choice of the next president. Final results of the national balloting gave the AKP 46% of the vote and 341 seats in the legislative branch. On 28 August 2007, Gul was elected by a majority in the third round of the presidential ballot, after failing to secure the support of two-thirds of sitting lawmakers in the previous two attempts. General Yasar Buyukanit, the commander of the Turkish armed forces, displayed his displeasure with Gul's election by refusing to attend Gul's swearing-in ceremony and reception; however, on September 10 the General met with the President privately. On January 26, 2008, eighteen members of the ultra-nationalist organization Ergenekon were arrested and charged with planning a series of assassinations of prominent figures in order to foment disorder and trigger a military coup against the AKP government; the number of people charged in the plot increased to 86 in July 2008. In March 2008 the Constitutional Court accepted indictments against the governing Justice and Development Party and 71 of its officials, including President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan, for allegedly seeking to establish an Islamic state.

One moderating issue in Turkey's factional politics has been the country's strong desire to join the European Union. In October 2001, the legislature approved a package of 34 amendments to the constitution designed to meet EU criteria for opening accession negotiations and, in November 2001, it approved revisions to the civil code. Further constitutional changes were made in May 2004, including the abolition of the death penalty, full equality for women, and the abolition of the controversial anti-terrorist state security courts. However, the state apparatus has balked at effective implementation for many of the changes. For example, in January 2002, the government cracked down on a campaign to allow Kurdish language instruction in schools; despite having eased restrictions on the Kurdish language, the changes have not been implemented and use of the language remains prohibited. Emboldened by the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish region across the border in northern Iraq, the separatist Kurdistan People's Congress (Kongra-Gel), formerly known as the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK, ended a five-year unilateral ceasefire in June 2004. In August 2004, the government launched a three-day military offensive against rebel posts along the border with Iraq. Violent attacks by Kurdish militants have continued through

2007; these attacks are often launched from rebel strongholds in Iraq. In August 2006 a new Kurdish separatist group, Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAC), targeted Istanbul and the country's vacation resorts with a bombing campaign. The resurgent Kurdish rebellion has provided a context for reconciling the ruling AKP and the military, at least temporarily; on 17 October 2007, the Grand National Assembly voted overwhelmingly to authorize military incursions into Iraq in pursuit of PKK rebels. Military forces immediately massed along the border and began bombardments of rebel positions in Iraq but did not cross the border due to the objections of the Iraq and US governments. The US did begin providing intelligence to the Turkish forces regarding PKK positions in Iraq and finally, on 18 December 2007, several hundred Turkish troops crossed into Iraq to directly engage PKK militants. Despite its professed, strong desire to gain ascension to the EU, Turkey continues to substantially restrict the representation of Kurdish interests.