



Cyprus, Northern — Va-PoReg Country Report

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07/23/1974 Start Electoral Democracy [semi-sovereign, external affairs under Turkey, Electoral Democracy]: On this date, Turkish-Cypriots established a de facto government in the northern region of Cyprus. On 06/20/1976, Northern Cyprus conducted general elections. Rauf Denktaş, representing the National Unity Party, was elected as president. Additionally, the National Unity Party secured 30 out of the 40 seats in the National Council. On 11/15/1985 Denktash, the head of the Turkish Cypriot National Unity Party (UPB), proclaimed the establishment of statehood for the Turkish sector of Cyprus. This formal declaration of independence set the stage for the enactment of a new democratic constitution in 1985 (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 23). Since the Turkish invasion of 1974, Cyprus has remained divided, with the northern third declared as the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) by its Turkish Cypriot inhabitants. The United Nations deems this declaration legally invalid and urges the withdrawal of Turkish troops that intervened in support of the Turkish Cypriot minority. Despite its unilateral declaration of independence in 1983, the government of Northern Cyprus has received diplomatic recognition only from Turkey and lacks recognition from the international community.¹ From 1975 to 2005, Rauf Denktaş served as president, actively seeking international recognition for Northern Cyprus as a fervent nationalist. However, this stance became a significant hindrance to reconciliation efforts, particularly when the Republic of Cyprus joined the European Union. In 1993, Northern Cyprus underwent multi-party parliamentary elections that ousted the long-ruling National Unity Party in favor of a coalition between the Democratic Party and the Republican Turkish Party (CTP). Despite this change, a new coalition formed in August 1996 between the National Unity Party and the Democratic Party, remaining in power for the next eight years. In 2003, the CTP and DP established a new government, appointing CTP leader Mehmet Ali Talat as the new Prime Minister.² In 2004, the Annan Plan received the support of two-thirds of Turkish Cypriots in a referendum but was rejected by nearly three-quarters of Greek Cypriots. The plan aimed to establish the United Cyprus Republic, but the Greek Cypriot rejection meant only they could enjoy EU membership benefits. Despite this, attitudes toward Turkish Cypriots have begun to shift internationally. The Republic of Cyprus government continues to uphold embargoes on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) despite the vote outcome. In October 2020, Ersin Tatar, representing the National Unity Party (UBP), became the 5th president of the TRNC, winning against the incumbent president Mustafa Akıncı in the presidential elections.³ According to Freedom House, civil liberties are generally maintained, and the multiparty political system is largely democratic, although it has faced increasing interference from the Turkish government. Ongoing issues include corruption, discrimination against minority communities, and human trafficking.⁴ The TRNC rests heavily dependent on Turkey, especially in the domains of economy and military. The currencies used in the TRNC are the Turkish Lira and the Euro. The main trading partner is Turkey and about half the population now are nationalistic Turkish immigrants.⁵ We classify Northern Cyprus as an independent country, however, the heavy dependence on Turkey raises the question, of whether to classify it as a de facto Turkish protectorate. According to FH, a score of 6 to 7 for 1981-1985 designates the territory as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. As per FH's classification for 1986-1988, the territory receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. Per FH, for the years 1989 to 1991, the territory is classified as free, scoring between 2 and 4, which we also place in the free category. As classified by FH for 1992- 1999, the territory is partly

free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. According to FH, for the years 2000 to 2019, the territory is categorized as free with a score between 2 and 4, which corresponds to our interpretation of free. As per FH's classification for the rest of the regime period, the territory receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. LIED and V-Dem do not register Northern Cyprus in their data.

Electoral Democracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Northern_Cyprus

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Northern_Cyprus

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Northern_Cyprus

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/northern-cyprus>

⁵ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/T%C3%BCrkische_Republik_Nordzypern#Wirtschaft

References

Haggard, Stephan/Kaufman, Robert/Teo, Terence (2016): Distributive Conflict and Regime Change: A Qualitative Dataset (Codebook). San Diego/Rutgers: University of California/State University of New Jersey.