



Turkey — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[For the time before 10/29/1923 see Ottoman Empire. In 05/26/2022, the Republic of Turkey officially changed its name to Republic of Türkiye.]

10/29/1923 End Constitutional Monarchy/Start One-Party (Personalist) Autocracy: On this date, the establishment of the Republic of Turkey formally concluded the Ottoman constitutional monarchy. This pivotal change was led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), who became the first President of Turkey. The regime change resulted from the military success of the Turkish National Movement led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), which defeated both the occupying Allied forces and the Ottoman monarchy during the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922). The establishment of the Republic of Turkey on 10/29/1923 formally concluded the constitutional monarchy. The transition to a one-party (personalist) autocracy was thus driven by a successful rebellion rather than negotiation or voluntary abdication. The Republican People's Party (until 1924 People's Party) was the only party that could be voted for in elections. Hence, there was no competition (Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 102). From the first election on male suffrage was universal and in 1934 female suffrage was introduced.¹ Under Atatürk's leadership, Turkey embarked on a comprehensive program of political, economic, and cultural reforms aimed at transforming the former Ottoman Empire into a modern, secular, and nation-state. This transition signified the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, an entity that had spanned over six centuries, and the beginning of a new era in Turkish history. Political liberties were absent according to LIED and V-Dem's PCLI until the end of 1945. For 1946 PCLI changed into a range which we interpret in the way that political liberties were not really present. Since 1925, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were absent. According to LIED, both executive and legislative elections were held, but they were not categorized as multiparty.

07/21/1946 End One-Party (Personalist) Autocracy/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: On this date, Atatürk's successor, İsmet İnönü, allowed the first multi-party elections in the country's history at the national level. However, in these elections, the Republican People's Party still won 395 of the 465 seats. This is an example of how the change from a one-party autocracy to an electoral autocracy is often initially a gradual rather than a fundamental regime change. Nevertheless, the RPR lost the elections on 05/14/1950 and accepted the alternation in power. Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. During this time the country's election were not competitive according to LIED. From 1946 to 1949 V-Dem's CEI declares a not really cleanliness. Additionally, the overall election conditions are scored as ambiguous by V-Dem's EF&FI. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive's constraints fell into Intermediate Category 3, between substantial limitations and executive parity or subordination. The LDI classifies Turkey from 1946 to 1950 still as an autocracy presenting what we classify as none scores. On 05/14/1950 elections remained not competitive (LIED). Between 1950 and 1957, the country's elections according to V-Dem's CEI had a somewhat level of cleanliness. Furthermore, the election conditions are somewhat free and fair following V-Dem's EF&FI. As per Polity5's categorization, from 1950 to 1953, the executive's authority was significantly constrained, nearing parity with other branches, placing it in the third intermediate category. From 1954 onward, the executive faced substantial limitations on decision-making power. Since 1950 the LDI indicates in our

interpretation a level of not really. However, we classify the regime in this period as an electoral hybrid regime. Initially, the ruling Democratic Party (DP) secured its position through legitimately won elections in 1950 and relatively fair elections in 1954. Regarding political liberties, they were absent according to LIED. According to V-Dem's PCLI, they were not really present until 1950. For 1951-1955 PCLI indicates an ambiguous status. For the remainder of the time, they were considered not really present. From 1946 to 1950 and from 1955 onwards, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. For the remaining years, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

10/27/1957 End Electoral Hybrid Regime/Start Electoral Autocracy: The manipulated election of 10/27/1957 marks the pivotal moment when the incumbent government transitioned from an electoral hybrid regime to an electoral autocracy. Facing waning popularity, the DP engaged in electoral manipulation. In the lead-up to the 10/1957 election, the government engaged in district gerrymandering, restricted opposition media access, prohibited public gatherings, banned political coalitions, and targeted opposition leaders with harassment. Post-election, numerous allegations emerged regarding voter registration and vote count discrepancies. Subsequently, as ballot boxes were relocated for a recount, the facility destined for this recount suffered a fire incident before the process could begin, resulting in all disputed seats being allocated to the DP. This sequence of events substantiated the allegations of electoral fraud (Glazer 1996, Tursan 2004: 70-71, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 102-103). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Regarding the country's election, they are classified as not competitive by LIED. According to V-Dem's CEI the elections reached somewhat clean scores. The elections are acknowledged as somewhat free and fair by V-Dem's EF&FI. Moreover, political liberties were absent (LIED) and not really present, according to V-Dem's PCLI. V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited. Furthermore, following the not really LDI scores, Turkey can therefore be classified as an electoral autocracy. As per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was significantly constrained by institutional checks during this time.

05/27/1960 End Electoral Autocracy/Start Military Autocracy: On this date, a military coup led by Chief of the General Staff Gürsel ousted the prime minister Adnan Menderes (DP), dissolved the assembly and established the Committee of National Unity of 38 officers to rule. Gürsel ruled as a military head of government. Menderes was tried and hanged under the military junta. They purged the rest of the government of Menderes supporters. However, the junta allowed for new elections in 1961 (Haddad 1965: 115-18, Brooker 1995: 253, Glazer 1996). Political liberties were absent according to LIED and V-Dem's PCLI indicates an ambiguous status. According to LIED, no multiparty executive or legislative elections were held during the specified period. For this period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

10/15/1961 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: The parliamentary elections are considered to be free and fair and the following regime as democratic (Haddad 1965: 119-20, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 103).² The constitution ratified in 1961 promulgated human rights as one of the pillars of the Turkish republic and established an robust and independent judiciary.³ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since 1961 the elections are scored as competitive by LIED. In addition, since 1962 the elections score somewhat cleanliness levels (V-Dem CEI). Moreover, the overall election conditions are classified as somewhat free and fair according to V-Dem's EF&FI. For 1961-1962, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous regarding the status of political liberties. In the period 1963-1969, LIED

identifies political liberties as absent, whereas V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as suggesting that political liberties are somewhat present. For the rest of the period, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous regarding the status of political liberties. According to Polity5, from 1961 to 1964, the executive was subordinate to or held equal power with other institutions, indicating executive parity or subordination. From 1965 to 1970, the executive's authority was significantly constrained, nearing parity with other branches, placing it in the third intermediate category. V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also robust. Except in 1965, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were comprehensive, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. In this period the regime is a clear case of an electoral democracy.

03/12/1971 End Electoral Democracy/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: Violence and strikes committed by left-wing students, neo-fascist paramilitaries, and Islamic fundamentalists brought the country to the brink of collapse. It was at this moment that the military demanded by letter that the prime minister should leave office and appoint a stronger, less political leader who could restore order. Suleyman resigned immediately after reading the letter and Nihat Erim was appointed as a non-party prime minister.⁴ According to FH, a score of 6 to 7 for the assessed regime period designates the country as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. Political liberties were absent according to LIED and ambiguous according to V-Dem's PCLI. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive. According to LIED, only multiparty legislative elections were held during this period. No executive elections were present.

03/13/1973 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Democracy: On this date, the Turkish presidential elections were held and Fahri Korutürk was elected president.⁵ When the military-backed candidate for the presidency was defeated, the army retreated to the barracks, relinquishing governance back to the politicians.⁶ On 10/14/1973 general elections were held, which saw the Republican People's Party victorious.⁷ In the following year the country was governed mainly by weak coalitions and was shaken by a surge of violence.⁸ While elections appeared to be free and fair and the judiciary effectively monitored the government, the state of democracy was marred by significant discrimination against the Turkish Kurds and a rise in anti-communist terror (Gastil 1979: 297). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. From 1973 to 1979 the elections are competitive following LIED. In addition, V-Dem's CEI indicates somewhat clean and V-Dem's EF&FI somewhat free and fair elections. As classified by FH for 1973, the country is partly free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. As per FH's classification for the rest of this regime period, the country receives a score of 5 as free, which we categorize as rather free. Moreover, LIED still indicates that political liberties were absent, while V-Dem's PCLI indicates that they were somewhat present from 1974 to 1979. V-Dem's LDI indicates that the regime was not really a liberal democracy. The terror of the 1970s resulted in an estimated death toll of 5,000, primarily attributed to right-wing and terrorist activities. According to data from British Searchlight magazine in 1978, there were 3,319 fascist attacks, resulting in 831 fatalities and 3,121 injuries.⁹ Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating robust constraints on the executive.

09/12/1980 End Electoral Democracy/Start Military Autocracy: The elected government of Suleiman Demirel was overthrown by a military coup led by General Kenan Evren. He and the rest of the military high command established a five-member National Security Council composed of the service chiefs. They appointed a civilian cabinet and extended martial law to the entire country (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 90, Brooker 1995: 253, Glazer 1996, Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 103).¹⁰ Upon the occurrence of the coup in 1980, the military asserted that its involvement would be temporary. Following this, in 1981, the junta designated a

Consultative Assembly tasked with formulating a fresh constitution. By 1982, this constitution underwent a referendum. Additionally, the Consultative Assembly drafted electoral legislation, paving the way for the formation of new political entities. In October 1983, despite the setback of their preferred candidate, the military relinquished authority to the incoming government (Haggard/Kaufman/Teo 2016: 63-64). As classified by FH for this regime period, the country scores between 9 and 10 as not free, which we interpret as rather not free. Political liberties were absent according to LIED. V-Dem's PCLI classifies political liberties as absent in 1981 and 1982 and as not really present in 1983. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. According to LIED, no multiparty executive or legislative elections were held during the specified period.

11/06/1983 End Military Autocracy/Start Electoral Democracy: On this date free and fair parliamentary elections were held. The National Security Council was dissolved on 12/13/1983. The 1983 elections were won by a party not allied with the military (Ahmad 1984: 3, Glazer 1996). In 1984, a conflict broke out between the Turkish government and Kurdish insurgent groups, primarily the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), who demanded an independent Kurdistan. In 1985 paramilitary militias were established in the Southeast of the country to oppose Kurdish separatists. Starting on 07/1987 in the South-East of Turkey, a state of emergency was declared, which lasted until 11/2002.¹¹ On 12/24/1995, general elections were held. Following these elections, a coalition was formed between the True Path Party (DYP) and the Motherland Party (ANAP), with Mesut Yilmaz of the ANAP serving as Prime Minister. This government failed only four months later following a censure motion by the Welfare Party (RP). The RP was then asked to form a government.¹² On 02/28/1997 military leadership of the Turkish armed forces sent a briefing note to Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan of the RP. On 06/30/1997 the military forced the prime minister to sign several policies restoring secularism. Shortly after the prime minister resigned. In the aftermath, a new government coalition was formed between the ANAP, the Democratic Left Party (DSP), and the Party for a Democratic Turkey (DTP). The Constitutional Court of Turkey banned the RP in 1998, for violating the constitutional separation of church and state.¹³ While this post-modern coup is clearly a breakdown of democracy, the military did not take power and democracy continued with a new coalition government. On 04/18/1999 general elections were held, with the DSP becoming the largest parliamentary party, following which they formed a coalition with the second placed Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the fourth-placed ANAP. This coalition proved very stable, remaining in power until 2002.¹⁴ Elections were held again on 11/03/2002, with none of the previous governing parties returning to parliament. The newly formed Justice and Development Party (AK) secured 34% of the votes and Republican People's Party (CHP) secured 19%. The AK's founder, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was not permitted to hold a seat in parliament, due to a previous conviction for inciting racial intolerance. In 2003, this ban was overturned by the AK and the CHP, allowing him to become Prime Minister in 03/2003.¹⁵ On 07/22/2007, general elections that had been scheduled for November were held early, after the parliament had failed to elect a new president. The AK secured 46.6% of the votes and Erdoğan was reelected as Prime Minister.¹⁶ A constitutional referendum on 10/27/2007 passed with roughly 69% approval, reducing the presidential term from seven to five years, introducing the election of the president by the popular vote instead of parliament, allowing for reelection of the president into a second term, reducing the parliamentary term from five to four years, and reducing the quorum needed for parliamentary decisions from 67 to 34%.¹⁷ On 06/12/2011 general elections were held, following which Erdoğan was confirmed for a third term as prime minister.¹⁸ In May and June 2013 there had been violent clashes in İstanbul and several other cities between environmental demonstrators and riot police, prompting accusations of heavy-handedness by Erdoğan's government and criticism from the EU. In December that year a political crisis was triggered by a corruption scandal allegedly involving senior political and business figures and an apparent government attempt to suppress police investigations (Macmillan 2022a). Presidential elections were held on 08/10/2014, with Erdoğan winning the popular vote in the first round and assuming the presidential office on 08/28/2014. On 08/29/2014, he was succeeded as Prime Minister by Ahmet

Davutoğlu.¹⁹ General elections on 06/07/2015 resulted in no clear majority, and despite Davutoğlu being tasked with the formation of a new government by President Erdoğan, coalition negotiations failed and new elections were called for 11/01/2015.²⁰ Davutoğlu became Prime Minister once more and held the office until 05/22/2016, when he resigned and was succeeded by Binali Yıldırım.²¹ A constitutional referendum held on 04/16/2017 increased the seats in the Grand National Assembly from 550 to 600.²² The entire period was marred by a variety of issues. The military still held a significant amount of power and torture in the prison system persisted (Gastil 1987: 360). Kurdish organizations were faced with harassment and discrimination and Kurdish parties were targeted by repression for alleged ties to the Kurdish PKK. Furthermore, the judiciary and freedom of press came repeatedly under pressure from the government, which led to self-censorship and a partial justice system (Puddington 2014: 709-714, Piano/Puddington 2004: 703-705). Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. For the whole regime period the elections are scored as competitive by LIED. Between 1984 and 1987 Turkey's election are pointed out with somewhat cleanliness levels. From 1988 to 2007 the elections enhanced to cleanliness. In 2008 they sided back to somewhat cleanliness levels (V-Dem CEI). Until 1990 the elections are somewhat free and fair. Since 1991 the overall freedom and fairness is scored (V-Dem's EF&FI). Per FH's scoring for 1984 and 1985, the country is classified as partly free with a score of 8, which we categorize as rather not free. As classified by FH for the years 1986 to 1992, the country is partly free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. According to FH, for 1993, the country is partly free with a score of 8, which we interpret as rather not free. Per FH's evaluation for 1994-2001, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. According to FH, a score of 6 to 7 for the rest of the assessed regime period designates the country as partly free, which aligns with our interpretation of rather free. However, LIED still considers that political liberties were absent. V-Dem's PCLI indicates an ambiguous state regarding political liberties from 1983 to 1999 and from 2013 to 2014, indicates somewhat present political liberties in between these periods. According to Polity5, from 1983 to 1988, the executive's constraints fell into Intermediate Category 3, between substantial limitations and executive parity or subordination. From 1989 to 2013, the executive was subordinate to or held equal power with other institutions, indicating executive parity or subordination. Until 1984, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were comprehensive, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. From 1986 to 1996, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating robust constraints on the executive. Between 1997 to 2009, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were comprehensive, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. For the remaining years, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were robust, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. The other years the outcomes increased to somewhat political rights. Despite this fact, the LDI declares not really outcomes from 1983 to 1999 and from 2010 to 2014. Turkey in this period is an absolute borderline case between an electoral democracy and an electoral hybrid regime.

07/01/2014 End Electoral Democracy/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: Erdogan was named the AKP's candidate in Turkey's first direct presidential elections. Election at local level took place in March 2014 and turned out highly controversial with regards to vote-rigging. Despite these accusations, the AKP was the obvious winner. Erdogan won the elections on 08/10/2014 with 51.8% of the vote and became president, followed by a wave of mass arrests of journalists and further repression against the opposition. The 2014 elections showed anomalies in terms of freedom and fairness. Furthermore, democratic competition was nearly not possible because oppositional parties lacked funding and media attention paving the way towards authoritarianism. Erdogan was sworn in on 08/08/2014 with Ahmet Davutoğlu, also of the AKP, replacing him as prime minister. The questionable landslide voter turnout of the 2018 elections was not reflected on a local level (Lansford 2021, Macmillan 2022a).²³ In December 2014 a wave of arrests of journalists on charges

of establishing a terrorist group was described by the opposition CHP as a coup against democracy, which further undermined EU confidence in the Turkish government's respect for the rule of law and fueled concerns over a concentration of political power in Erdoğan's hands (Macmillan 2022a). Parliamentary elections in June 2015 deprived the AKP of a majority but, after governing as an interim administration until November that year, the party won an unexpected and decisive victory in further polling marred by violence and media restrictions (Macmillan 2022a). The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for a number of fatal attacks on Turkish soil in 2015 and 2016. For 2015, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as ambiguous regarding the status of political liberties. For 2016, PCLI indicates that political liberties were not really present. V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

07/15/2016 End Electoral Hybrid Regime/Start Electoral Autocracy: On 07/15/2016-07/16/2016, a faction of the Turkish military comprising approximately 1.5% of the armed forces attempted to overthrow President Erdoğan's government, deploying tanks to Istanbul and Ankara, bombing the parliament with F-16 jets, and kidnapping Chief of General Staff Hulusi Akar. The coup plotters, primarily mid-ranking officers acting outside the chain of command and attributed to the Gülenist movement, controlled two Istanbul bridges and Akıncı Air Base but never secured the presidency, parliament, police forces, or majority of the military. Massive civilian counter-mobilization, loyalist police and military resistance, and Erdoğan's social media appeals led to the coup's collapse within 21 hours, resulting in 251-290 deaths and 2,200+ injuries. The failed coup did not constitute a regime change because the putschists never exercised effective state control, but Erdoğan's response did: a state of emergency declared on 07/22/2016 enabled mass arrests of over 100,000 individuals, closure of 15 universities and dozens of media outlets, and sweeping institutional reforms subordinating the military to civilian control. This crackdown transformed Turkey from an electoral hybrid regime to an electoral autocracy, a shift formalized by the 04/16/2017 constitutional referendum establishing a presidential system with expanded executive powers (Macmillan 2022a). According to Polity5, from 2014 to 2015, the executive's constraints were categorized as Intermediate Category 2, between slight and substantial limitations. From 2016 to 2017, the executive's authority was subject to minor institutional constraints. As classified by FH for 2014 and 2015, the country is partly free with a score ranging from 6 to 7, which we place in the rather free category. Per FH's evaluation for 2016, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. In this timeframe, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, whereas V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as showing that political liberties are not really present.

04/16/2017 Continuation Electoral (Personalist) Autocracy: On 04/16/2017, voters approved a referendum that dramatically expanded the powers of the president. 51.4 % of the voters voted yes and 48.6 % voted no. The position of prime minister was abolished, and a presidential system was established (see Constitution and government, below) (Lansford 2021). Hence, the subtype of the electoral autocracy changed. Erdoğan's purge extended from summer of 2016 through 2018 and included penalties ranging from lengthy prison terms to simple dismissals across government and military institutions as well as universities and the media (Lansford 2021). In June 2018 Turkey held what proved to be one of the most significant elections in its history. Called 18 months in advance of the originally scheduled date and attracting voter turnout of a remarkable 87 %, those elections decided both the presidency and composition of the parliament. In each case, the ruling AKP and its leader, Erdoğan, prevailed, further entrenching the Islamist authoritarian regime already in place. The success that Erdoğan's AKP enjoyed in the 2018 parliamentary and presidential elections was not replicated in the municipal elections conducted in March 2019 (Lansford 2021). While the AKP-MHP coalition won 51 % of the vote in local balloting across Turkey overall in March 2019, it lost to CHP candidates in the country's two largest cities, Ankara and Istanbul. In the latter in particular, the CHP's Ekrem Imamoglu edged former AKP prime minister Yildirim by 48.8 to Yildirim's 48.5 percent in the mayoral race. Claiming irregularities at polling stations across the city, the AKP forced an annulment of the results and a new election. In that rerun on June 23, however, Imamoglu won decisively, finishing 10 percentage points ahead of Yildirim. It was a very

disappointing outcome for Erdogan, whose AKP controlled nine fewer mayoralties than beforehand, despite the fact that the president held a collective 202 rallies in 59 cities over the 50 days preceding the elections (Lansford 2021). Erdoğan's purge extended from summer of 2016 through 2018 and included penalties ranging from lengthy prison terms to simple dismissals across government and military institutions as well as universities and the media (Lansford 2021). In June 2018, Turkey experienced one of its most pivotal elections in history. The elections were held 18 months ahead of the originally planned date and saw an impressive voter turnout of 87%. These elections were crucial as they determined both the presidency and the composition of the parliament. In both instances, the incumbent AKP and its leader, Erdoğan, emerged victorious, further consolidating the already established Islamist authoritarian regime. In the presidential elections in May 2023, neither of the leading candidates managed to secure a majority, leading to a second-round election between Erdoğan and the opposition candidate Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu on the 28th of May. Erdoğan managed to secure the presidency once again with a 52,2% majority. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the IEOM claimed in a final observation report that while the elections were generally free and competitive, they were not fair. Voters were given a genuine choice on the ballot, yet biased media coverage favored Erdoğan, and restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression impeded participation. In country, voter-turnout was high at 88.92% (OSCE 2023). After the earthquake in February 2023 the government restricted access to social media platform X, issuing arrests and imposed fines for government critical media posts or commentary.²⁴ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Since 2018 the election a no longer competitive according to LIED. From 2015 to 2021 V-Dem's CEI reflects ambiguous levels of electoral cleanliness. In 2022 no real cleanliness was scored, while 2023 marks ambiguous cleanliness outcomes. From 2014 to 2017 the elections score somewhat freedom and fairness. Since 2019 the election conditions changed to ambiguous (V-Dem EF&FI). Per FH's evaluation for 2016, the country scores from 9 to 10 as not free, which we categorize as rather not free. According to FH's classification for the rest of the assessed regime period, a score of 11 makes the country not free, which we also place in the not free category. In addition to that, political liberties were absent (LIED). According to V-Dem's PCLI they were not really present since 2016. Based on Polity5's assessment, the executive faced slight limitations on power during this period. From 2017 to 2018 and in 2023, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also absent. For the remaining years, V-Dem's JCE is classified by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were absent, whereas V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were limited.

Electoral (Personalist) Autocracy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional sources (Arjomand 2008, Birand 1987, Cook 2007, Alcock et al. 2001, Karpat 1959, Karpat 2000, Özbudun 1995, Weiker 1980, Yavuz 2006, Yavuz 2009, Kim 1984)

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_suffrage#cite_note-centralasiainstitute.org-37

² <https://www.org/military/world/europe/tu-military-coup-1961.htm>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkish_Constitution_of_1961#VII._Judicial_Power

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nihat_Erim

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1973_Turkish_presidential_election

⁶ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkey/Political-developments-1970s-to-90s>

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1973_Turkish_general_election

⁸ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkey/Political-developments-1970s-to-90s>

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multi-party_period_of_the_Republic_of_Turkey#1961%E2%80%931980:_The_Second_Republic

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1980_Turkish_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat

- ¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Republic_of_Turkey
- ¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1995_Turkish_general_election#Coalition_of_Ordered_government
- ¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1997_Turkish_military_memorandum
- ¹⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1999_Turkish_general_election
- ¹⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Turkish_general_election
- ¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007_Turkish_general_election
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- ²⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_2015_Turkish_general_election
- ²¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahmet_Davuto%C4%9Flu
- ²² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2017_Turkish_constitutional_referendum
- ²³ <http://www.sirjournal.org/research/2020/12/28/turkeys-electoral-authoritarianism>
- ²⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/turkey/freedom-world/2024>

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