

## TURKEY

**OFFICIAL NAME:** Republic of Turkey  
 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti)  
**CAPITAL:** Ankara  
**POPULATION:** 62,484,000 (1996 est.)  
**DATE OF INDEPENDENCE:** Successor state to the Ottoman Empire  
**DATE OF CURRENT CONSTITUTION:** Approved November 9, 1982  
**FORM OF GOVERNMENT:** Parliamentary democracy  
**LANGUAGES:** Turkish (official), Kurdish, Arabic  
**MONETARY UNIT:** Turkish lira  
**FISCAL YEAR:** Calendar year  
**LEGISLATURE:** Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi)  
**NUMBER OF CHAMBERS:** One  
**NUMBER OF MEMBERS:** 550  
**PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN:** 2.4  
**TERM OF LEGISLATURE:** Five years  
**MOST RECENT LEGISLATIVE ELECTION:** December 24, 1995  
**MINIMUM AGE FOR VOTING:** 18  
**MINIMUM AGE FOR MEMBERSHIP:** 30  
**SUFFRAGE:** Universal and direct  
**VOTING:** Compulsory  
**ADDRESS:** Turkish Grand National Assembly, Ankara  
**TELEPHONE:** (90 312) 420 51 51  
**FAX:** (90 312) 420 67 56

The Republic of Turkey is a mountainous country that lies mostly in Asia minor (Anatolia); a relatively small area lies in Europe. Since 1982 the country has been a semi-presidential style parliamentary republic with a single-chamber legislature, a president, and a prime minister.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Under Ottoman rule, from the fifteenth to the early twentieth century, legislative, executive, and judicial powers were concentrated in the hands of the sultan. The strong state tradition obscured the emergence of representative institutions in the empire until the second half of the nineteenth century. During the Ottoman period, representation was based on the Islamic principles of *mesveret* and *shura* (both referring to consultation), rather than on the rights of groups. The principle of the rule of law was first introduced with the nineteenth century reforms exemplified in the declarations of the sultan, including the Deed of Alliance of 1808, the Imperial Rescript of Rosechamber of 1839, and the Reform Rescript of 1856.

During the first (1876–1878) and the second (1908–1918) constitutional periods, the Ottoman political system was

transformed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional system. A bicameral General Assembly (Meclis-i Umumi) was opened on March 19, 1877, and suspended by Sultan Abdülhamid II on February 14, 1878. The Assembly was not reconvened until the Young Turk Revolution.

The Young Turk Revolution began in 1908 and ousted Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1909. After establishing a limited constitutional monarchy, the Young Turks' Union and Progress Party dominated as a one-party regime until the defeat of the Ottoman state in World War I. The last Ottoman legislature was convened on January 12, 1920, and dissolved when the Allied Forces occupied Istanbul.

During the national liberation and independence movement led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi) was established on April 23, 1920. In the 1921 constitution, with the idea of national sovereignty, the Assembly was empowered to exercise legislative, executive, and judicial functions as supreme authority, but in practice the speaker of the Assembly, Kemal, exercised these powers.

Soon after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923—with Kemal as president—the new constitution established a majoritarian democracy, rather than a liberal democracy based on checks and balances. During about thirty-seven years of one-party rule of the Republican People's Party (RPP), a theoretically all-powerful Grand National Assembly that represented the will of a unified people was controlled by its political leadership and institutionalized under the party's tutelage. In the 1950s the principle of Assembly supremacy was interpreted differently, and the ruling Democratic Party functioned as the absolute power of the parliamentary majority. Eventually, in 1960, the Turkish armed forces took over.

To avoid the constitutional deficiencies and governmental abuses that prevailed during the 1950s, the 1961 constitution adopted a different form of parliamentary government. This constitution codified the separation of powers, thus rejecting the principle of parliamentary supremacy. A powerful judiciary that could review the constitutionality of laws was instituted, and parliament became bicameral. Turkish society was recognized to be pluralist and liberal. Autonomous institutions, such as universities and the Radio and Television Agency, were brought into the system and shared authority in the government. Many criticized this weakening of legislative and executive power.

Liberal-pluralist developments were affected adversely by economic deterioration and increasing civil disobedience.

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ence in the late 1960s. The Justice Party government of Süleyman Demirel was dismissed by a military communiqué in March 1971. Under a quasi-military and quasi-parliamentary regime, the 1961 constitution was amended to favor military privileges. Judicial review was limited, the executive was strengthened, and the legislature was weakened vis-à-vis the executive. The state's authority over individual and social rights and freedoms was expanded.

Political and economic instability augmented the political polarization and ideological fragmentation at the mass and elite levels. In fact, varying social, economic, political, and international factors led to a breakdown of democracy, culminating in the military intervention of September 1980, the third in thirty years.

Controlling the executive and legislative powers, the National Security Council—which consisted of General-in-Chief Kenan Evren and the commanders of the army, air force, navy and military police—planned to reestablish democracy. The new draft constitution, which was prepared by the Constitution Committee of the appointed Consultative Assembly, was revised by the National Security Council and approved by a referendum on November 9, 1982.

#### EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS

In the 1982 constitution the executive is empowered both directly and through the procedural changes in the legislative process. In the interests of efficiency and effectiveness, the constitution established a unicameral parliament, the Grand National Assembly. The rules were simplified and the sessions of the Assembly expanded to give the executive more time to accomplish tasks. Party discipline was increased so that delaying tactics would be minimized. The quorum was reduced to one-third of the deputies. More-

over, executive authority over legislation was expanded by the right to enact emergency decrees having the force of law.

Although the power of the executive was meant to be enhanced through the 1982 constitution, the result has been somewhat different. The president of the republic was given distinctive functions, including the ability to make appointments—a function that may conflict with the requirement that the president be impartial. Yet the president can neither act completely independently of the government (that is, the prime minister and the cabinet, known as the Council of Ministers), nor can the president impose a program upon the government or execute its main policies. This two-tiered status of the executive was meant to enhance the authority of the state rather than of the executive alone. But the functions of the executive may also undermine the authority and autonomy of the legislature. In short, the constitution's strengthening of the executive led more to personal rule than to a strong executive branch.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The present Grand National Assembly has three functional organizations: the Bureau of the Assembly, the Consultative Council, and the committees. The Bureau of the Assembly is composed of the speaker, the deputy speakers, secretary members, and administrative members elected from among Assembly deputies. The speaker and deputy speakers cannot participate in the activities of their party group in or out of the Grand National Assembly and cannot vote when they are presiding.

The speaker mainly presides over the plenary of the Grand National Assembly, the Bureau of the Assembly, and

the Consultative Council. The speaker also supervises the committees' activities and manages and supervises the general administration of the Grand National Assembly. According to the rules of procedure, the speaker performs the duties prescribed in the constitution or laws, for example, serving as acting president of the republic in the event of the temporary absence, resignation, or death of the president.

The secretary members are responsible for supervising records, reading and correcting the documents of the plenary, counting votes, and supervising internal legislative elections. The administrative members essentially deal with administrative and financial matters, maintain order in the plenary, and assist the speaker.

The Consultative Council is convened under the speaker of the Grand National Assembly and is composed of leaders of the party groups or delegated members. All decisions made by the council are introduced to the plenary by the speaker and voted on by a show of hands.

#### COMMITTEES

Most committees of the Grand National Assembly are designed to correspond with ministries. At present, there are sixteen standing (permanent) committees: Final Accounts of the Grand National Assembly; Agriculture, Forestry, and Village Affairs; Constitution; Environment; Examination of Human Rights; Foreign Affairs; Health and Social Services; Industry, Technology, and Commerce; Interior Affairs; Justice; National Defense; National Education; Petitions; Plan and Budget; Public Works, Construction, Transportation, and Tourism; and State Economic Enterprises.

Some of the committees were designated to perform special functions. Final Accounts of the Grand National Assembly examines and submits the final accounts of the previous year's budget of the Grand National Assembly to the plenary. The State Economic Enterprises Committee is given the duty to audit the accounts of public establishments and partnerships in which more than half of the capital directly or indirectly belongs to the state.

Citizens have the right to apply in writing to the appropriate authorities and to the Grand National Assembly with regard to requests and complaints. The Petitions Committee deals with appeals made by the public on various issues; the committee functions as a problem solver and sometimes prepares the groundwork for future proposals.

Ad-hoc or investigative committees may also be formed in the Grand National Assembly. That is, parliamentary inquiries or investigations can be conducted by a temporary

committee elected by the plenary. Any move to waive the parliamentary immunity of a member is also subject to investigation by a joint committee taken from the Constitution and the Justice Committees.

In a hierarchical division of labor, each committee consists of a chair, a deputy chair, a reporter, a secretary, and members. The number of members on a committee, unless established by the constitution or by the rules of procedure, is determined by the plenary through a show of hands. Most committees have twenty-five members; Petitions, with nine, and Final Accounts, with eleven, are smaller; State Economic Enterprises, with thirty-five, and Plan and Budget, with forty, are larger. Parties are represented in proportion to the number of seats they have in the Grand National Assembly.

The prime minister, the Council of Ministers, the deputies, and other representatives of the government can participate in committee meetings, but only the committee's members can propose a motion of amendment on the legislation that is before the committee. A committee may call an expert to its meeting, if necessary, and may ask for review of an issue by another committee.

Committees may examine, amend, accept, reject, or combine the drafts and proposals assigned to them by the speaker. The committee whose report on the issue is recognized as essential is called the parent committee, a body determined according to the law and the rules of procedure by the speaker. Committees must submit their reports within forty-five days of assignment. Committees keep records and make reports. The biannual status reports regarding matters assigned to the committees are published as annexes to the Grand National Assembly minutes.

#### PROCEDURES

In Turkish parliamentary history, the earliest rules of procedure were developed during the first constitutional period. The rules of procedure of the National Assembly dating back to 1973 were amended by a resolution of parliament on May 16, 1996.

During a legislative year (October 1–September 30) the Grand National Assembly regularly convenes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. except on national holidays. The 1982 constitution prescribes two types of convening: ordinary and extraordinary. The Grand National Assembly convenes of its own accord on October 1 (ordinary convening). During an adjournment and recess the Assembly may be summoned by the president either on his or her own initiative or at the request of the Council of Ministers (extraordinary convening). The



speaker of the Assembly may also summon the Assembly, either on his or her own initiative or at the written request of one-fifth of the members. The Grand National Assembly may be in recess for a maximum of three months in the course of a legislative year and may postpone its activities for no more than fifteen days upon the advice of the Consultative Council and on the vote of deputies.

Unless otherwise stipulated in the constitution, the Grand National Assembly convenes with at least one-third of the total number of members (that is, 183 members) and takes decisions by an absolute majority of those present; however, the quorum for taking a decision can under no circumstances be less than one-quarter plus one of the total number of members (that is, 128 members). A motion of constitutional amendment is subject to the ordinary rules concerning legislation; however, a three-fifths majority by secret ballot is required for approval of each article of the motion in the first and second debates and of the whole motion in the second debate. To secure the quorum for decisions in favor of the governing party, a minister may cast two votes—one for him- or herself and one for an absent minister. Abstentions are included in the quorum for decision.

#### DEBATES AND VOTING

In the Grand National Assembly, the agenda is set in the following order: announcement of proposals formulated by the speaker's office; reading of the special agenda of the Consultative Council, if any; elections to committees; matters to be voted; debates on motions of general debate and parliamentary inquiry; oral questions; and deliberation on drafts, proposals, and other matters reported by the committees.

In case of emergency, both the government and a maximum of three members are allowed to speak outside of the agenda. First, the committees, then the government, and then the party groups speak, and each is limited to twenty minutes. Individual members' addresses are limited to ten minutes. In the second round of speeches, the time limit is half that of the first round. In principle the last speech is given by an individual member.

Plenary sessions are open to the public, and debates are published verbatim in the minutes. The plenary may hold closed sessions upon a written request of the prime minister, a member of the Council of Ministers, a political party group, or twenty members. Publication of the minutes of closed sessions is subject to the decision of the Grand National Assembly.

Some actions that are specifically outlawed by the rules of procedure can be sanctioned by the speaker of the Grand

National Assembly directly. For instance, if a member uses vulgar language, the speaker may issue a warning; if the behavior continues, the member may be asked to leave the rostrum or to stop speaking. Moreover, the speaker may call for a recess of up to one hour in case of deliberate disorder; if such disorder continues, the speaker may close the session. Historically, unruly behavior has been very common in the Turkish legislature. Troublemaking deputies apparently had better chances of reelection because their actions were interpreted favorably by constituents. In recent years, unruly behavior and disorder have increased as fragmentation and polarization have increased; the government's majority was slim and opposition powerful.

The rules of procedure of the Grand National Assembly allow for three types of voting: electronic; open and public; and secret. Electronic voting is used unless the constitution and the rules of procedure call for another type of vote. Open or public voting is used in important cases, for example, the draft of the budget law, tax proposals, five-year plans, constitutional amendments, and international treaties. Upon the written request of at least fifteen members, a vote will be made open. Voting is conducted in secret if at least fifteen members petition in writing and have the approval of the plenary, unless the constitution, law, or the rules of procedure require otherwise. Each member places a white, red, or green ball into pots, indicating agree, disagree, or abstention, respectively.

#### SUPPORT AND FACILITIES

The Office of the Speaker of the Assembly organizes and directs all security and administrative services of the Grand National Assembly and its annexes. The main administrative personnel of the Grand National Assembly have the status of privileged civil servant according to the Turkish personnel system. These include the secretary general, the private counselors, and the director of private clerks. All are appointed by the speaker of the Grand National Assembly.

Several departments supply essential legislative services. First, the Office of Legal Acts and Resolutions oversees legislative procedures and guides legislators through the process of drafting proposals and amendments. Second, the Office of Records publishes and preserves the records of debates at the plenary session. Third, the Office of Parliamentary Services, which was established in 1984, provides secretarial assistance and facilities for legislative and constituency services. One of the important service units of the Grand National Assembly is its Library and Documentation Center, which provides research, documentation, and data processing services.

The present building of the Grand National Assembly, the third, was started in 1939 and opened in 1960. The main building has four large meeting halls, 44 smaller halls and 352 other rooms. In the Assembly chamber, which was re-decorated in a semicircular seating style in 1996–1997, there are 524 seats for the deputies in the lower floor, and 725 seats for the audience, 75 seats for higher officials, 75 seats for diplomatic officials, and 80 seats for the press on the upper floor. Around the speaker's rostrum, 50 seats are reserved for the Council of Ministers and the members of the committees. Increasing constituency services led the administration to have an annex built; this was completed in 1984. This new parliamentary office building gives the Turkish parliament the world's third largest facility.

#### LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

According to the 1982 constitution, law making in the Grand National Assembly includes passing constitutional amendments, laws, decrees having the force of law, and budget and accounts drafts; ratifying treaties; and confirming death penalties, amnesties, and pardons. Resolutions of parliament regulate the internal organization and workings of the legislature. For example, elections of committees and decisions to adjourn and recess are part of the internal decision-making process. The Assembly also takes votes of confidence when requested by the executive. The Grand National Assembly is also authorized to declare a state of war, to approve the imposition of martial law and states of emergency, and to implement development plans prepared by the State Planning Organization.

The Council of Ministers may introduce laws. A deputy may also propose a bill on his or her own initiative. In practice, with the exception of some bills supported by party groups, bills initiated by individual legislators have rarely been enacted.

The speakership, to which all bills are submitted, immediately refers proposals to the relevant committee or committees. For efficiency, similar bills may be combined by the speakership or the relevant committees.

The deliberation process at the plenary of the Grand National Assembly starts with a general debate on the whole draft or proposal by the committees, party groups, the Council of Ministers, and individual members. Individual members, the committees, and the Council of Ministers may submit motions of rejection, resubmission to the committee, or amendment of an article and may add a new article to the draft or proposal. Amendments first are read in the order of arrival and then are examined. The speaker

asks whether both the committee and the Council of Ministers accept the amendment; if not, the proposal's sponsor may speak on the motion for not more than five minutes. Motions are disposed of by electronic vote. The parent committee or the Council of Ministers may request to re-submit the entire proposal or separate provisions to the committee without debate. Decision of the plenary of the Grand National Assembly is final.

Finally, the president of the republic promulgates the laws adopted by the Grand National Assembly within fifteen days. If the president deems a law unsuitable, the law returns to the Grand National Assembly for further consideration. Budget laws are not subject to this provision. If the Grand National Assembly adopts the returned law in its original form, the president of the republic promulgates it; if the Assembly amends the law that was referred back, the president may either accept the amended law or return it again to the Assembly. The president's power is less a veto than a warning. He may submit to referendum a proposed constitutional amendment or bill that has been reconsidered by the Grand National Assembly and adopted without change.

Decrees having the force of law were introduced to the Turkish constitutional law system with the constitutional amendments of 1971. Indeed, the 1876 constitution had a similar provision empowering the Council of Ministers to enact laws in emergencies. According to the 1982 constitution, three kinds of decrees have the force of law. The first group of decrees is issued in normal times by the Council of Ministers on the basis of an authorization law passed by the Grand National Assembly. The second type of decrees is issued by the Council of Ministers under the president of the republic, during states of emergency and under martial law (emergency decrees). The final type of decrees can be enacted by the president of the republic and concerns the general secretariat of the presidency.

However, fundamental rights, individual rights and duties, and political rights and duties cannot be regulated by decrees having force of law, except during martial law and states of emergency. Deliberation on decrees is held in the committees and the plenary with priority and urgency. The unconstitutionality of a decree can be considered as if it had been enacted by the Grand National Assembly and published in the official gazette.

The president of the republic, parliamentary party groups in power, the main opposition party, and a group of at least one-fifth of the members of the Grand National Assembly may apply to the Constitutional Court to annul, on the grounds of unconstitutionality in form and substance,



laws, decrees having force of law, rules of procedure of the Grand National Assembly, or specific articles or provisions of legislation. Application must be made within sixty days after publication in the official gazette of the contested item. Decisions of the Constitutional Court are final and not retroactive. The Constitutional Court is also authorized to review constitutional amendments, but only with regard to the adoption procedure.

#### BUDGETARY PROCESS

Expenditures of the state and of public corporations other than state economic enterprises are determined by annual budgets. The Council of Ministers submits a draft of general and subsidiary budgets and a report containing the national budgetary estimates to the Grand National Assembly at least seventy-five days before the beginning of the fiscal year (January 1). The Budget Committee adopts the draft budget within fifty-five days and submits it to the plenary. During debates in the plenary session, deputies cannot make any proposal that would entail an increase in expenditure or a decrease in revenue.

The Council of Ministers also submits the draft final accounts to the Grand National Assembly within seven months of the end of the relevant fiscal year, unless otherwise prescribed by law. Upon submission of the draft final accounts in conjunction with the draft budget by the Budget Committee, the plenary considers and decides on the accounts and the budget. General principles of constitutional review apply to the budget law.

#### SUPERVISORY POWERS

The increasing scope of governmental activities has made supervision of the executive by parliament essential. In the present Turkish constitution, the supervisory powers of the Grand National Assembly are exercised through questions, general debates, parliamentary inquiries, parliamentary investigations, and interpellation.

A question "is a request for information addressed to the prime minister or ministers to be answered orally or in writing on behalf of the Council of Ministers." Oral questions that are not answered within a certain time limit are changed into written questions. Unanswered questions become obsolete at the end of a legislative term.

A general debate is "the consideration of a specific subject relating to the community and the activities of the state at the plenary sessions of the Grand National Assembly." General debates may be initiated by the Council of Ministers, political party groups, or at least twenty deputies. The plenary of the Grand National Assembly decides whether a general debate is to be held.

A parliamentary inquiry is "an examination conducted to obtain information on a specific subject," with the exception of state and commercial secrets. A special committee is convened for the purpose. A general debate shall be held by the plenary on the report prepared by the committee, which is given three months to complete the report.

Parliamentary investigations concerning the prime minister or other ministers, or ex-prime minister or ex-ministers, may be requested with a motion supported by at least one-tenth of the members of the Grand National Assembly. The Assembly must consider and decide on such a request within one month. A special committee composed of fifteen members, with political parties represented proportionally, prepares a report within two months of its assignment. Debate on the committee's report is held with priority in the Assembly. If necessary, the plenary may decide by a majority of the total membership to bring the person being investigated before the Constitutional Court acting as Supreme Court. If the Supreme Court so decides, the person concerned loses his or her position in the Council of Ministers.

Among all parliamentary means of control, only the interpellation (a legislative questioning of actions) may force accountability on the Council of Ministers or a minister. The Assembly may through interpellation force a government or individual minister to resign. In the event of criminal charges investigated by parliament, a minister may be brought before the Constitutional Court acting as Supreme Court.

A motion of interpellation may be submitted on behalf of a political party group or upon the signature of at least twenty deputies. In the course of debate on the motion of interpellation, if a motion of no confidence with a statement of reasons is submitted by deputies or party groups, or if the Council of Ministers requests a vote of confidence, a vote is taken after a full day has elapsed. To unseat the Council of Ministers or a minister, an absolute majority of the total number of members is required, and only votes of no confidence are counted.

#### SUFFRAGE AND CANDIDACY

According to the present constitution, every Turkish citizen over eighteen years of age has the right to vote in elections and to take part in referendums. Privates and corporals serving in the armed forces, students in military schools, and detainees and convicts in prison cannot vote. Every Turkish citizen over the age of thirty and who has completed primary education is eligible to be a deputy. It is also necessary to meet the other election qualifications set forth in the constitution; for example judges and prosecu-

tors, teaching staff of the universities, and public employees cannot be a candidate unless they resign from office.

Members of the Grand National Assembly generally have immunity from criminal prosecution and also cannot be held liable for statements and votes within the Assembly. Loss of membership under certain conditions may be decided by absolute majority of the total number of members. A deputy may appeal to the Constitutional Court to annul the decision waiving parliamentary immunity or disqualifying the deputy from membership.

Women are still underrepresented in the Grand National Assembly; generally only a small number of the 550 deputies are female. The deputies' level of education is higher than the national average. Incumbency is not ensured: the average turnover rate of deputies has been 50 percent since 1950. Salaries and travel allowances are regulated by law. Deputies' monthly salary, excluding the travel allowances, does not exceed that of the most-senior civil servants.

#### PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

According to the provisions of the constitution and the relevant laws, a political party may be established by at least thirty Turkish citizens eligible to be elected to the Grand National Assembly; a party group may be formed with at least twenty members in the Grand National Assembly. Party groups have official status and special powers, for example, to make a motion for interpellation. Party groups work according to group by-laws, and they meet once a week to make decisions and discuss strategy.

The present Grand National Assembly is composed of 550 deputies elected for five-year terms from several multi-member districts under the direction and judicial supervision of the Supreme Election Council. Elections are held according to the principles of free, equal, direct, universal suffrage and the public accounting of votes. The Grand National Assembly or the president of the republic may call for early elections before the termination of the five-year period in accordance with the conditions stated in the constitution. A by-election is held once in every election period, thirty months after the general election. However, if the number of vacant seats reaches 5 percent of the total, by-elections must be held within three months, but no less than one year before the general election.

Although the first parliamentary election was held in 1877 in the Ottoman period, the multiparty era in Turkish politics began in 1946. Until that date, elections were non-competitive and indirect, voting was open, and counting of votes was closed. The 1950 election, in which political power was for the first time in Turkish politics transferred from one party to another, was the first conducted on the basis of

a simple plurality system with a single ballot, secret voting, and open counting under judicial supervision. Proportional representation was adopted in the lower house in 1961 and in the Senate in 1964, and judicial supervision of elections was broadened.

Throughout 1960s and 1970s, proportional representation encouraged the formation of small parties and resulted in the fragmentation of the party system. It became very difficult for a party to form a stable majority government. To curb the proliferation of small parties, the post-1980 military government opted for a two-party system. Moreover, a party was required to obtain a minimum of 10 percent of the votes at both the district and the national levels. In the district, the candidate's party must garner at least the number of votes obtained by dividing the number of votes cast by the number of deputies allotted to the district. Since 1983 both the Political Parties Law and the Law on the Election of Deputies have been amended several times to strengthen the majoritarian features for the benefit of big parties. Contingent candidacy and preferential voting were also novelties of the post-1983 system. Nevertheless, the present electoral system—proportional representation with a 10 percent national threshold—has been criticized as being too often undemocratic and unfair.

In the 1980s and 1990s the Turkish party system went through a radical change. The 1983 elections brought about a moderate left-right party system; the predominant Motherland Party governed for eight years. Following the referendum of 1987 lifting the ban on pre-1980 politicians, new political parties emerged challenging the predominant party and the majority government objectives of the post-1983 regime. Starting from the 1987 elections, splits and mergers of political parties and the intensive transfer of deputies between political parties have become dominant characteristics of the Turkish party system.

Restructuring of political parties ended with the critical election of 1991; since then, the fragmentation of the party system and the reemergence of coalition governments signaled the end of the "manufactured majority" of the 1980s. The intraparty and interparty factionalism on the right and left of the spectrum contributes to party splitting and therefore to the fragmentation of the party system. Hostility toward other parties and a lack of intraparty democracy are the main factors for factionalism in Turkish politics. Fragmentation on the right and left of the spectrum brought about the rise of the periphery—traditional, local, and religious values. In short, the Turkish party system is a centripetal, fragmented, unstable, and uncertain structure.

*Ömer Faruk Gençkaya*



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## TURKMENISTAN

See Commonwealth of Independent States, Non-Slavic

## TUVALU

OFFICIAL NAME: Constitutional Monarchy of Tuvalu  
(Fakavae Alik-i-Malo i Tuvalu)

CAPITAL: Fongafale

POPULATION: 10,000 (1996 est.)

DATE OF INDEPENDENCE: October 1, 1978  
(from the United Kingdom)

DATE OF CURRENT CONSTITUTION: Effective October 1, 1978

FORM OF GOVERNMENT: Constitutional monarchy

LANGUAGES: Tuvaluan, English

MONETARY UNIT: Australian dollar

FISCAL YEAR: Calendar year

LEGISLATURE: Parliament (Fale I Fono)

NUMBER OF CHAMBERS: One

NUMBER OF MEMBERS: 13 (12 directly elected, 1 ex officio)

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN: 7.7

TERM OF LEGISLATURE: Four years

MOST RECENT LEGISLATIVE ELECTION: November 25, 1993

MINIMUM AGE FOR VOTING: 18

MINIMUM AGE FOR MEMBERSHIP: 21

SUFFRAGE: Universal and direct

VOTING: Optional

ADDRESS: Parliament of Tuvalu, P.O. Box 39,  
Vaiaku, Funafuti

TELEPHONE: (688) 20 250

FAX: (688) 20 253

Tuvalu, formerly the Ellice Islands, comprises nine small atolls in the western Pacific Ocean near Fiji and Kiribati. It was a British colony (under the Western Pacific High Com-mission) from 1877 until 1916, when it was administratively merged with the Gilbert Islands. In 1978 the Ellice Islands achieved independence as Tuvalu, and a year later the Gilbert Islands became independent under the name of Kiribati.

Under the 1978 constitution, the Tuvalu Parliament con-sists of twelve members directly elected by universal adult suffrage for four-year terms. Two members are elected from each of the four islands with populations greater than one thousand, and one member is elected from each of the remaining four inhabited islands. Each island is treated as a constituency, so candidates on the larger islands run in two-seat constituencies. There are no political parties.

Nearly half the members of Parliament are also cabinet members. The prime minister is elected by Parliament or appointed by the governor general if Parliament is unable to agree. Alternatively, the governor general, a Tuvaluan appointed to represent the British monarch, may order the dissolution of the Parliament of Tuvalu.

George Thomas Kurian