

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

[**A Lesson in Democracy for Turkey's Islamist President: Steven Emerson, *Algemeiner*, Sept. 6, 2017**](#) — When Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Washington, DC this past May...

[**Victims of Turkey's Islamization: Women: Burak Bekdil, *Gatestone Institute*, Aug. 31, 2017**](#)— On Feb. 6, 1935, Turkish women were allowed to vote in national elections for the first time, and eighteen female candidates were elected to parliament...

[**The US Standoff with Turkey: Robert Ellis, *Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 2, 2017**](#)— When it comes to Turkey, the US is faced with a dilemma.

[**Erdogan's Turkey: Reliable Partner or Western Foe?: Charles Bybelezer, *The Media Line*, Aug. 22, 2017**](#)— Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan forcefully inserted himself into Germany's upcoming elections by urging Turkish foreign-nationals to boycott major parties, including Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats.

[**On Topic Links**](#)

[**How Turkey Went From Being a Strategic Asset to a Liability: Simon A. Waldman, *World Politics Review*, June 14, 2017**](#)

[**Get NATO's Nukes Out of Turkey: Jonathan Marshall, *Huffington Post*, Sept. 5, 2017**](#)

[**Pro-Erdogan Media in Turkey Inciting Antisemitism Over Kurdish Independence Referendum: Ben Cohen, *Algemeiner*, Sept. 17, 2017**](#)

[**New Mideast Realities Require Support for Kurds: Trudy Rubin, *The Inquirer*, Sept. 15, 2017**](#)

A LESSON IN DEMOCRACY FOR TURKEY'S ISLAMIST PRESIDENT

Steven Emerson

[*Algemeiner*](#), Sept. 6, 2017

When Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan visited Washington, DC this past May, he was greeted outside the home of the Turkish ambassador by a small group of protesters concerned about his crackdowns on civil rights, and his antagonism towards Turkey's Kurdish population. Within minutes, Erdogan's bodyguards sprang into action, accompanied by others in the Turkish posse, beating and kicking the protesters — who included women and senior citizens. A 61-year-old woman later told the *Guardian* that she had feared for her life after guards punched her in the face. When 60-year-old Turkish-American Reza Dersimi tried to assist the elderly woman, he, too, was assaulted.

Local police quickly intervened, arresting several of the attackers, including Erdogan's guards. Some of those who ran off were apprehended in the days that followed — but many remain at large. The arrests infuriated Turkey's president. "They have incarcerated our citizens!" cried Erdogan, who has regularly thrown foreign journalists and human rights leaders into Turkish prisons for absolutely no crime whatsoever.

Now the US government has indicted 19 of the attackers for their violent abuse of the protesters, whom Turkish leaders accuse of having been members of the Kurdish terrorist group PKK. (There is no evidence, however, to suggest that any protester had terror ties.) Turkey's Foreign Ministry has described the indictments as "unjust and biased," and claims that the indictments include the "names of people that have never been to the US." The indictment — against 15 Turkish security guards, two Turkish-Canadians, and two Turkish-Americans — contains 21 counts of assault and hate crimes, and describes the incident as a "conspiracy to assault protesters and law enforcement officials."...

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

Yet rather than apologize for the violence, Erdogan has declared the indictments “scandalous,” praised the attackers for their actions, and decried America’s failure to protect him from the protesters. True, some protesters did shout “Long Live the YPG,” referring to a Syrian-Kurdish militant group that the United States has engaged with in its fight against the Islamic State (Turkey considers this group to be a terrorist organization). But such cries, in a democratic state, hardly call for a violent response.

Moreover, Erdogan’s objections reek of hypocrisy. In the past two years, his government has detained numerous foreign nationals on trumped-up charges of “terrorism,” a word that Erdogan bandies about to describe critics of his ideology or his regime, including human rights workers and journalists. He has called on foreign governments to arrest their own citizens for statements critical of him, such as his April 2016 demand in April that Germany charge comedian Jan Böhmermann for his profanity-laced poem criticizing the Turkish president.

And only days later, Dutch-Turkish columnist Ebru Umar, vacationing in the Aegean coastal town of Kusadasi, was pulled from her bed in the middle of the night by police and arrested for cursing Erdogan on Twitter. She was released from custody the following day, but was not permitted to leave the country for several weeks. Other dual-citizens have suffered similar fates or worse, such as German-Turkish Die Welt reporter Deniz Yucel, who was arrested in February on charges of “terror propaganda and inciting hatred,” according to CNN. Yucel had “interviewed PKK leader Cemil Bayik ‘under the guise of being a journalist’ and reported on security forces’ operations in Turkey’s southeast against Kurdish militants by ‘undertaking propaganda by expressing the discourses of the armed terror organization,’” the prosecutor’s office told CNN.

And it’s not just dual nationals. Turkey’s July arrest of German activist Peter Steudtner and several others attending a workshop on digital security — again on terrorism charges — led German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel to issue a warning to Germans about visiting Turkey. French freelance reporter Loup Bureau was also taken into custody last month in Turkey, again on charges of assisting

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

terrorists. The charges were based not on anything he was doing at the time, but on a 2013 story that he had produced about members of the YPG for France's TV5 Monde.

And in one particularly notorious case, Turkish police arrested British VICE reporters and their Iraqi fixer in 2015 in Diyarbakir, a city with a large Kurdish population. The charge: "knowingly and willfully helping the armed terrorist organization without being part of its hierarchical structure," according to Turkey's Anadolu News Agency. Although court papers did not include the name of the terrorist group, the journalists' lawyer, Tahir Elci, told Reuters that, "They were accused of meeting and siding with both the Islamic State and the PKK-affiliated group [YDG]."

Erdogan's message here is clear: his critics and dissenters and their associates are "terrorists" who must be subdued through violence, imprisonment or both — and those who oppress them, preferably through violence and imprisonment, are the righteous ones, the heroes. This ideology, unsurprisingly, links Erdogan far more closely to Islamist, authoritarian governments than to the democracies of the West. Indeed, as Scott Peterson observed in the Christian Science Monitor:

Fifteen years into his rule, Erdogan has gradually turned his country away from the secular tradition of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who founded the modern state from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. And there is little room for any competing views as the once ardently secular eastern anchor of NATO, which has aspired to membership in the European Union, weakens once-promising linkages with the West, promotes the role of religion in public life, clamps down on opponents and the media, and moves ever more firmly away from democratic norms.

By contrast, in America and other Western nations, reporters are free to follow their investigations; peaceful protesters are free to voice their views; and

government agents may not use violence against innocent civilians. What type of law is this? It's called democracy, Mr. Erdogan. And this is what it looks like.

[Contents](#)



VICTIMS OF TURKEY'S ISLAMIZATION: WOMEN

Burak Bekdil

[Gatestone Institute](#), Aug. 31, 2017

On Feb. 6, 1935, Turkish women were allowed to vote in national elections for the first time, and eighteen female candidates were elected to parliament - a decade or more before women even in Western countries such as France, Italy and Belgium. Eight decades later, Turkish women look like unwilling passengers on H.G. Wells' *Time Machine* traveling back to their great-grandmothers' Ottoman lives.

Turkey's strongman, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, once proudly said that "Women should know their place," and that "Gender equality is against human nature". His deputy prime minister said that women not to laugh in public. It was not shocking to anyone when Turkey's Ministry of Family and Social Policies found in 2016 that no fewer than 86% of Turkish women have suffered physical or psychological violence at the hands of their partners or family. According to the ministry's findings, physical violence is the most common form of abuse: 70% of women reported they have been physically assaulted.

More recently, *Kadin Cinayetlerini Durduracagiz Platformu*, a women's rights

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

organization, reported that 28 women were murdered by men in July 2017 alone. The same month, eight other — luckier — women were physically assaulted for "wearing shorts or 'indecent' outfits or smoking in public." The report concluded by saying, "The state remains silent."

Turkey increasingly features all possible social and political reflections of Islamism: authoritarianism, majoritarianism and officially-tolerated intolerance to everything Islamists may deem "un-Islamic." Women are often the target group, and might not avoid intimidation even if they dress in line with the Islamic code. Hayrettin Karaman, an Islamic scholar and the darling of Turkey's pro-Erdogan Islamists, recently argued that smoking cigarettes sends signals about women's morals. He wrote in his Aug. 3 column: "When I see a woman who wears a headscarf but also smokes in public, I get the impression that she's saying: 'Don't mind the fact that I am covering my head. Don't give up on me, I have a lot more to share with you.'"

Naturally, many Turkish men took the cleric's words as a message of sexual availability. This kind of thinking is common in conservative Muslim societies. It did not used to be that way in secular Turkey. It is simply an outcome of Turkey's top-down government-induced social Islamization. That has two disturbing aspects: willing social participation of people who comply, and inequality before law.

In 2014, 17-year-old K.C. was raped and beaten by two men. She filed a complaint with the police, and the two suspects were detained. All normal, up to this point. One of the suspects made a deal with K.C.'s family: he paid a sum of about \$5,700 to the family and agreed to marry K.C. The family arranged a bogus wedding ceremony, took pictures and presented them to the court to save the man. Under pressure from her family, K.C. changed her testimony and said she was not raped. The rapist had suddenly become her fiancé. Both suspects were released, an Islamic religious ceremony was arranged and the rapists were acquitted. Not really a happy ending. K.C.'s "husband" started to beat her regularly and the girl once again went to the police and told her real story. Her husband was her rapist and

she had been forced to marry him...

[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#)—Ed.]

[Contents](#)



THE US STANDOFF WITH TURKEY

Robert Ellis

[Jerusalem Post](#), Sept. 2, 2017

When it comes to Turkey, the US is faced with a dilemma. Initial enthusiasm for regime change in Syria gradually waned when it was realized that one of the actors in the proxy war, Turkey, was furthering its own agenda with US support. The spectacular failure of the half-a-billion-dollar program to train Syrian rebels was one marker to signal the end of this policy and make way for another objective: the defeat of Islamic State.

This in turn has led to the realization that the only effective boots on the ground are the predominantly Kurdish SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces), which with US advisers and materiel is leading the assault on the ISIS stronghold, Raqqa. The bone of contention is that the YPG (People's Protection Units), which makes up the backbone of the SDF, is considered by Turkey to be the Syrian counterpart of Turkey's PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), which both the US and Turkey have designated as a terrorist organization.

President Barack Obama gave Turkey carte blanche to reignite its war with the PKK in July 2015 in return for access to Incirlik airbase in southern Turkey. The

TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER ERDOGAN

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

same day vice president Joe Biden landed in Ankara last August to make nice with Turkey after the attempted coup, Turkey launched a cross-border operation into Syria to block an attempt to create a contiguous Kurdish zone along Turkey's southern border. Now Turkish forces are stuck west of the Euphrates, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatens with a new cross-border operation against the Kurdish canton of Afrin in Syria's northwest corner.

President Obama's decision in October 2014 to airdrop supplies to Kurdish forces besieged by ISIS in Kobane was a thorn in Turkey's eye, whereas Erdogan's meeting with his successor in May was a bitter disappointment. Instead of entering into an alliance with Turkey to defeat ISIS, President Donald Trump approved the Pentagon's plan to supply arms to the Syrian Kurds. The only concrete outcome of the visit was the passing of an unanimous resolution by the House of Representatives condemning the attack by President Erdogan's security detail on demonstrators outside the Turkish ambassador's residence. The security officials have also been indicted by a grand jury for violence.

A further aggravation was remarked late July by US special envoy Brett McGurk at the Middle East Institute in Washington, where he blamed the flow of weapons and foreign fighters into Syria for the creation of an al-Qaida safe haven at Idlib "right on the border of Turkey." Turkey considered McGurk's statements provocative, as the US itself supported a terrorist organization (YPG). At his meeting with US Defense Secretary James Mattis in Ankara last week President Erdogan expressed Turkey's unease at continued US support for the YPG, although Mattis assured his host the alliance was temporary and "not a choice but a necessity." If this is the case, the US will once again leave the Kurds in the lurch.

On the other hand, in a telephone conversation in May between President Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin both expressed a commitment to furthering their strategic partnership, including trade and joint energy projects. Furthermore, they confirmed their cooperation in the Astana process and the creation of de-escalation zones in Syria. The crunch will come when it comes to determining the future of Syria's Kurds and their demand for regional autonomy. President

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

Erdogan has warned Turkey will not permit “a terror corridor” in northern Syria and will intervene “whatever the cost.”

When in Ankara, Secretary Mattis also met with Turkey’s defense minister, Nurettin Canikli, where they discussed the importance of Syria and Iraq’s territorial integrity and concern over “Iran’s malign influence in the region.” A week earlier when Iran’s chief of staff General Bagheri visited Turkey, President Erdogan declared that a joint operation with Iran against the PKK in Iraq was on the government’s agenda. The situation has been further complicated by the Kurdish Regional Government’s president Masoud Barzani’s intention to hold a referendum on independence on September 25.

Relations between Europe and Turkey are already strained, as an overwhelming majority of the European Parliament in July called for a suspension of accession talks. The EU’s enlargement commissioner Johannes Hahn has declared it is time for member states to discuss the strategic implications of Turkey’s behavior, as “shrugging alone is not a political strategy.” Similarly, in view of the turn events are taking, a review of US policy would be timely. If the deal is finalized, Turkey’s purchase of Russia’s S-400 missile system will make nonsense of its NATO membership. The director of Russia’s Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSMTC), Dmitry Shugaev, has also said that all decisions regarding delivery of the S-400 missile system to Turkey correspond with Russia’s geopolitical and strategic interests.

In addition, the charge by a Turkish court that American pastor Andrew Brunson attempted to destroy constitutional order and overthrow the Turkish parliament is a blatant attempt to pressure the US into handing over the Turkish imam Fethullah Gulen, who is accused by Turkey of masterminding the attempted coup, and dropping charges against Reza Zarrab, an Iranian-Turkish businessman, who is indicted for conspiring to evade sanctions against Iran.

[Contents](#)



ERDOGAN'S TURKEY: RELIABLE PARTNER OR WESTERN FOE?

Charles Bybelezer

[The Media Line](#), Aug. 22, 2017

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan forcefully inserted himself into Germany's upcoming elections by urging Turkish foreign-nationals to boycott major parties, including Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats. "I am calling on all my countrymen in Germany," he affirmed, "the Christian Democrats, SDP [Social Democrats], the Green Party are all enemies of Turkey, [therefore] support [other] political parties." Germany has a large Turkish diaspora estimated at some three million people, many of whom will vote on September 24 when Merkel bids for a fourth term.

Erdogan's comments are the latest in an escalating war-of-words between Ankara and Berlin, whose ties deteriorated sharply in the wake of last year's failed coup in Turkey, to which authorities responded with a major crackdown on civil society. Some 150,000 public workers, journalists and activists have been dismissed, suspended or imprisoned—many over dubious charges—by their government, which blames the unrest on a clandestine network led by U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, a former Erdogan ally-turned-foe.

Earlier this month, the Turkish leader accused Germany of "abetting terrorists" for failing to extradite so-called "Gülenists" and claimed the country's Nazi past was not behind it; this, after he asserted that Berlin was "committing suicide" by not allowing him to speak to Turks at a July rally on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Hamburg (it was deemed a security threat by German authorities due to potential

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

counter-protests by Kurdish nationals). In April, Erdogan slammed Germany as “fascist and cruel” after demonstrations by his supporters were banned ahead of a referendum that gave him sweeping new powers.

For her part, Merkel has questioned Turkey’s commitment to democracy and suggested there would be no further progress towards its ascension to the European Union. Over the weekend, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel censured Erdogan’s “unprecedented act of interference in the sovereignty of our country...[which shows] that he wants to incite people in Germany against each other.”

According to Dr. Deniz Cifci, a political advisor at the Center for Turkey Studies in London, Erdogan’s attacks on Germany are largely precipitated by internal politics. “The president is trying to strengthen his position,” he asserted to The Media Line, “by lashing out he is sending a message to the public that Erdogan is the only power in Turkey, and that this power can take on Europe.” Moreover, Cifci reinforced the notion that Erdogan remains furious at Germany for providing asylum to members of the Turkish army following the 2016 coup attempt—and by accusing Berlin of complicity in the affair he is trying to pressure Merkel to take a hard line against Gulen’s German-based network. “But Germany has refused to bend,” he stressed.

As regards Erdogan’s intrusion into the German political arena, Cifci believes that it will have little tangible effect, as “most ethnic Turks there support either Kurdish-associated or left-oriented parties, those defined by Erdogan as enemies. They do not share the same views as the Turkish president and even if they did they will vote rationally and not for racist or nationalist parties because it is not in their interest.” Erdogan’s actions may also be motivated, Cifci elaborated, by a desire to confront the “one million Turks in Germany of Kurdish origin, most of whom left Turkey for political reasons. The majority of these Kurds oppose Erdogan and have some form of ties with the PKK.”

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

The rift between Turkey and its largest trading partner, the most influential country in Europe, has deepened a growing chasm with the west, in general, a dispute complicated by the fact that Ankara is a member of NATO. Nevertheless, according to Prof. Dror Zeevi, an expert on Turkey at Israel's Ben Gurion University and a Fellow at the Forum for Regional Thinking, no formal decision has yet been made by either side to abandon the prospect of Ankara joining the EU. "While relations have soured considerably," he expressed to The Media Line, "the Europeans have not closed the door to the bloc. They have made clear that should Turkey make changes this could lead to renewed talks. [For its part], Erdogan has been considering ditching the process for several years, but there are advantages to [maintaining good ties] with Europe—for example, the customs union—so he will tread very carefully."

Zeevi highlighted that the "Turkish government, while showing little enthusiasm for Europe, is in a bind because of its role in NATO. Whereas Ankara would like to be closer to Russia and Iran, it is limited because [the western military alliance] is still important in terms of training and equipment as NATO has long been a part of Turkey's geo-strategy." Despite this, he concluded, under Erdogan's leadership "there has been a slow shift towards the far east."...

[To Read the Full Article Click the Following [Link](#)—Ed.]

[Contents](#)

[On Topic Links](#)

[Get NATO's Nukes Out of Turkey](#): Jonathan Marshall, *Huffington Post*, Sept. 5, 2017—Even in this contentious era, one proposition still enjoys near-universal support: the United States should make it the highest priority to prevent nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of hostile states.

**TURKEY DRIFTS TOWARDS ISLAMIST DICTATORSHIP UNDER
ERDOGAN**

isranet-publications

Isranet Daily Briefing, September 18, 2017

<https://www.isranet.org/daily-briefing/turkey-drifts-towards-islamist-dictatorship-under-erdogan/>

[Pro-Erdogan Media in Turkey Inciting Antisemitism Over Kurdish Independence](#)

Referendum: Ben Cohen, *Algemeiner*, Sept. 17, 2017 —As the impending referendum on independence for the Kurdish region of Iraq draws closer, pro-government media outlets in Turkey - which remains bitterly opposed to Kurdish self-determination - are energetically promoting conspiracy theories centered on the alleged relations between Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani and the Israeli authorities.

[New Mideast Realities Require Support for Kurds](#): Trudy Rubin, *The Inquirer*, Sept. 15, 2017—In 2016, Iraqi Kurdish President Masoud Barzani told me that Mideast chaos had already destroyed the region's old borders.

[How Turkey Went From Being a Strategic Asset to a Liability](#): Simon A. Waldman, *World Politics Review*, June 14, 2017—As the dust settles from President Donald Trump's first visit to the Middle East, his policy in the region, such as it exists, is harkening back to the years before his predecessor, Barack Obama