



Parliamentary Elections in Turkey, November 2015

On 1 November 2015, Turkey held its second general election in a year. The poll was called by the President and leader of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Recep Tayyip Erdogan, following the hung parliament which resulted from the earlier June 2015 election, and the breakdown of negotiations to form a coalition government. In the interim, a [provisional government](#) had been formed, based on seat shares gained in the Grand National Assembly. However, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) had both refused to join that government, a key factor in the decision to hold another poll. Results [announced](#) by the Turkish news agency, Anadolu, revealed that on 1 November the ruling AKP won a majority (316 out of 550 seats) in Turkey's Grand National Assembly, giving them a mandate to govern the country for the next four years.

Background

Elections to determine who sits in the Turkish Parliament, or 'Grand National Assembly', are held every four years. The Grand National Assembly [consists](#) of a single chamber of 550 members, who are directly elected using a proportional representation system. Turkey itself is divided into 81 provinces, each of which is [allocated](#) a seat in the Grand National Assembly, with the remaining seats being [allocated](#) based on the size of each province's population. Provinces with between 19 and 35 seats are then split into two constituencies, and provinces which contain 36 or more seats are divided into three constituencies. Under [electoral law](#), in order for parties to participate in the distribution of seats in the Grand National Assembly they must receive at least ten percent of the nationwide vote.

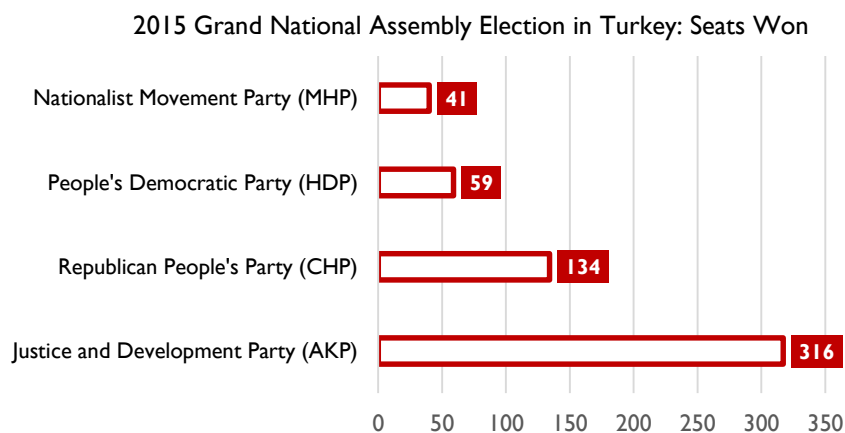
On 7 June 2015, [elections](#) were held in Turkey following the end of the Grand National Assembly's previous four-year term. The AKP won 258 out of 550 seats in that poll, but were 18 seats short of a majority, and thus the result was a hung parliament. On 9 July, President Erdogan [invited](#) the Prime Minister and the leader of the AKP, Ahmet Davutoğlu, to form a government. Under [Turkish electoral law](#), the Prime Minister has 45 days in which to do so, after being given such a mandate. With the People's Democratic Party (HDP) [refusing](#) to join a coalition with the AKP, and the MHP [opting](#) to remain in opposition, the AKP [entered](#) into negotiation talks with their main opposition, the CHP. However, [disagreements](#) arose between the parties about the duration of any coalition government, with the CHP making demands that the government would see out a full four-year parliamentary term, and the AKP only wanting the coalition government to last three months before calling an early election. With no party able to form a viable coalition, on 24 August 2015 President Erdogan called the snap general election for November.

The election campaign ran during a period of increased instability in the country, which including further tensions between the Turkish government and the Kurdish community. In March 2013, the Turkish government and militants from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) had agreed a ceasefire, following an

armed conflict since 1984 between the Turkish military and Kurdish militant groups calling for the creation of an independent Kurdistan. However, since the election in June 2015, that ceasefire has [collapsed](#), with violence escalating in the country following a [suicide bomb attack](#) at a peace rally on 10 October 2015. The pro-Kurdish HDP blamed the government for the attack, which left [97 people dead](#), stating it was “[perpetrated by the state against the people](#)”. Turkey has also seen economic instability in the past year, with the World Bank recently lowering its [growth outlook](#) for the country, and the country’s [unemployment rate](#) has reached 10.1 percent, which is “[well above the OECD average](#)”. Further, [negotiations](#) regarding Turkey’s accession to the EU, which have been ongoing for more than a decade, have also [stalled](#).

Electoral Results in Full

A full [breakdown](#) of the results of the November 1 poll is provided below.



Reaction

The Turkish elections were observed by the Organisation for the Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) who [reported](#) that an increase in violence, particularly in the south-east of Turkey, had “hindered contestants’ ability to campaign freely” prior to the poll. The OSCE also suggested there was a lack of media freedom, which they referred to as an “area of serious concern”, and [claimed](#) that criminal investigations of journalists and the closure of some media outlets had “reduced voters’ access to a plurality of views and information”. Their view was echoed by the co-chair of the HDP, Selahattin Demirtas, who [argued](#) that it had not been “a fair or equal election”. In addition, Johannes Hahn, the Commissioner in charge of EU Enlargement Negotiations, [stated](#) that “a deteriorating media situation impacts the overall readiness of the accession country to join the European Union”.

In contrast, President Erdogan, [proclaimed](#) that the result demonstrated that “national will [had] manifested itself on 1 November in favour of stability”. Erdogan called for international recognition of the election result, despite criticisms raised by the OSCE, [contending](#) that “now a party with some 50 percent [of the vote] in Turkey has attained power...this should be respected by the whole world”.

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