



INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS MISSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

**Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, Republic of Turkey
24 June 2018**

STATEMENT

Following an invitation from the authorities of the Republic of Turkey, the TURKPA International Observers Mission (*hereinafter referred to as Mission or Observers*) conducted a short-term monitoring of the presidential and parliamentary elections held on 24 June 2018 in the Republic of Turkey. The mission included representatives of the parliaments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan accompanied by the representatives of the TURKPA Secretariat.

Presidential and parliamentary elections in Turkey are primarily regulated by the Constitution and the Law on Basic Provisions on Elections and Voters Registers. Other legislation related to parts of electoral process include the Law on the Organization and Duties of the Supreme Election Council, Law on Presidential Elections, Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises and their Media Services and resolutions of the Supreme Election Council (SEC).

The Constitution guarantees that elections and referenda shall be held under the direction and supervision of the judiciary, in accordance with the principles of free, equal, secret, direct, universal suffrage, and public counting of the votes. Turkey is a party to major international and regional instruments related to the holding of democratic elections.

The Mission's programme included the meetings with the leadership of the Parliament, representatives of the political parties and the Supreme Election Council of Turkey (SEC) and observation of the voting process on the election day. During these meetings, observers were given detailed information as regards the measures taken on preparation for the elections. According to the information of the Supreme Election Council (SEC), about 56,3 million in-country voters and 3 million out-of-

country voters are registered to vote at 180 thousand ballot boxes. Out-of-country voting has been organized in 60 countries and lasted from 7 June till 19 June. Moreover, out-of-country voters were able to cast their ballots at 34 customs points as well.

Besides, the mission held meeting with the representatives of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Republican People's Party (CHP) Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the People's Democratic Party (HDP). The officials of the political parties briefed the observers on the electoral platforms and basic aspects of their parties' policies.

The SEC registered six (6) presidential candidates. Three of them have been nominated by political parties whereas three of them have been nominated by the signatures of at least hundred thousand electorates. Eight (8) political parties have taken part at the parliamentary elections. Five parties took part at the parliamentary elections through two different alliances in line with the latest legal amendments paving way for the formation of political alliances among political parties. Apart from political parties, 68 independent candidates run for a seat at the parliamentary elections in different electoral districts.

The parliament is elected for a five-year term under proportional system at 87 electoral districts with a national threshold of 10 percent. The president is elected for a five-year term with majority of valid votes. If no presidential candidates receive this majority, a run-off takes place two weeks later, where two candidates with the most votes in the first round participate.

The elections in Turkey are administered by four levels that constitute Supreme Election Council (SEC), Provincial Electoral Councils, District Electoral Councils and Ballot Box Committees. Out-of-country voting has been coordinated by the additional District Electoral Council established at the capital Ankara. The Mission emphasizes the professionalism of all levels of election administration, as technical and procedural aspects were well organized, including adoption of election calendar, voter registration and logistical improvements. The mission especially notes that all the necessary conditions were created for the 650.000 citizens with physical disabilities and 2,5 million elderly people (aged over 75) that enable them cast their votes in a comfortable manner. For the first time, mobile ballot boxes were introduced in order to give the opportunity for those who are unable to come to the polling stations due to their illness or disability cast their votes at their residences. Another novelty was development of software which facilitates tabulation of votes cast in the parliamentary elections.

TURKPA mission had the opportunity to monitor the voting process at all stages. Polling stations on election day were open from 8:00 until 17:00. Members of the mission visited about 40 polling stations in 12 districts of Ankara. The observers monitored vote cast, having talked to voters and representatives of presidential candidates, political parties and polling officials. The TURKPA observers were also present at the counting of votes at 3 polling stations in Ankara.

According to the information given by the Supreme Election Council (SEC), voter turnout was 87%. In this regard, the Mission noted the high turnout rate as a significant achievement in the name of democracy.

TURKPA observers are of the view that Turkey has a long-standing tradition of democracy and elections have always been held in a free, fair and transparent manner. The mission has not observed any significant violations or deviations from the legal framework and election procedure was administered in conformity with national legislation of Turkey and international norms.

All the legal and logistical conditions were provided for international observation of elections in Turkey. The Mission followed the objectivity, justness, transparency and impartiality principles confirmed by the relevant international instruments.

TURKPA International Observers Mission concludes that the presidential and parliamentary elections in the Republic of Turkey were held in compliance with the national legislation of Turkey and international democratic standards.