

**THE
NEW TURKEY**

CONTRACT

2023

APRIL 2015

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1

All political ideas and systems must serve the needs of the people, and reflect the changing conditions and demands across time and place. A political order which does not serve the people and respond to the changing needs of a society cannot last.

2

Progressing toward the Republic's centennial, the New Turkey will be the product of a comprehensive rejuvenation that speaks to changing needs of our time and our globalized space as well as the outcome of a process of Turkey's reconstruction since 2002.

3

As the grandchildren of a generation that fought the War of Independence to establish the Republic, soon after the suffering of the Tripolitanian War, the Balkan Wars and World War I one hundred years ago, we must cherish our homeland which was liberated as a result of many honorable sacrifices.

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4

Turkey's ethnic, religious, sectarian and regional diversity reflects the beauty of the inheritance of our ancient history that we share. It is the strongest basis of the fact that all citizens are equal and rightful owners of our homeland.

5

For our grandfathers who came from Anatolia, Rumelia, the Middle East and the Caucasus to fight against colonialism a century ago, and for the aggrieved nations in Central Asia, India, Southeast Asia and Africa who supported them with their prayers and assistance, the War of Independence was not only about one nation's survival but a sacred struggle for the equality and dignity of all mankind.



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Today, safeguarding human dignity represents the most fundamental principle of the Republic of Turkey.

7

We believe that our modern principle of respect for human dignity represent a reflection of the advice of a 13th century Anatolian mystic Sheikh Edebali, Let People Live So That the State May Survive. We believe that, in the domain of politics, Anatolian traditions of wisdom and modern values do not necessarily conflict but form a complementary and indivisible whole.

8

Attaining a high level of cultural and economic development worthy of human dignity represents a core component of our political ideals. The state's primary responsibility is to create political, cultural and economic conditions which will allow its citizens to lead an honorable and peaceful life.

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Human dignity lies at the heart of not only Turkey's political, economic and cultural order, but also its foreign policy.

10

Practice and policies infringing upon human dignity cannot be legitimized, justified or tolerated.

11

No authority or power-holder can humiliate an individual bearing the citizenship identity of the Republic of Turkey, which must be endowed with human dignity. Citizens of all faiths, colors, genders, linguistic backgrounds, races, political ideology, philosophy and lifestyle must be treated with dignity, and without discrimination or hate speech.



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12

States and nations excel and maintain their place in history if and only if the individuals comprising them have a strong and proud sense of identity.

13

The most basic guarantee of a nation's well-being consists of the sense of belonging that citizens feel toward their country, and a notion of politics that does not alienate or discriminate against any citizen or social group.

14

The people's sense of pride in belonging to an inclusive democratic nation would create and sustain peace in our country. Economic, political and military power of the nation, in turn, elevates and strengthens the people.



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Shared history and the principle of equal citizenship on the basis of rights, rule of law and justice constitute the basis of the idea of human dignity in Turkey's constitutional and political order.

16

The idea of connected history reflects our nation's ancient past and its shared sense of solidarity in the face of future challenges.

17

For centuries, we created the legacy of a common civilization in Anatolia, upon whose basis the Seljuk and Ottoman orders were established. Building on these experiences as well as the Republic's century-old legacy and five decades of multi-party democracy, we have completed a 13-year period of reform and rejuvenation. Today, full of self-confidence, we prepare to become a rising power of the twenty-first century.

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In this regard, our historic goal is to turn our nation, with all its diverse components, into an active agent, not subject, of global community, and to transform the Turkish state, which derives its power from the people, into a pioneer, rather than passive follower, of history.

19

The principle of equal citizenship, in turn, forms the basis of political legitimacy of democracy, a principle that cannot be weakened nor ignored under any circumstances.

20

Progressing toward the Republic's centennial on this basis, our priority is to ensure that the nation will be governed according to a participatory, pluralistic, liberal, democratic and civilian constitution.

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Human dignity will be the core principle, ethical reference and spirit of the new constitutional order, which will be built on the values of liberty, equality and justice.

22

Since human dignity cannot prosper in the absence of liberty, which reflects man's power of choice and free-will, human rights and freedoms must be at the heart of the country's new constitutional order.

23

In our ancient political traditions, the public authority has a responsibility to protect life, faith and property. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in turn, defines the limits of fundamental freedoms.



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As such, freedom of thought, conscience, expression and enterprise represent part and parcel of human dignity and identity and, therefore, must be under the constitutional protection.

25

The sole restriction on these liberties consists of the very liberty and dignity of other citizens with equal rights.

26

All forms of liberty come with responsibility. Freedom of the press and expression requires media ethics and respect for privacy, while the freedom of enterprise calls for a sense of legitimate and taxed income. The freedom of conscience, in turn, entails respect for religions and belief systems other than one's own.



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Believing that public order facilitates and safeguards human rights and liberties, we consider freedom and security to be complementary, not contradictory, concepts.

28

A human being whose liberty is not guaranteed cannot protect their dignity. Nor can an individual who has been deprived of security exercise their liberties.

29

The restriction of liberty in the name of security leads to dictatorial regimes, which eventually eliminate human dignity. Ignoring security for the sake of liberty, in turn, creates chaos and internal strifes. As such, we believe that a healthy balance and harmony between security and liberty lies at the heart of democratic political legitimacy.



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Political legitimacy is the product of a social contract and consensual relationship between citizens, who are the original founders of the political order, and the state, which is the face of this arrangement.

31

In this regard, the only the source and supervisor of political legitimacy and sovereignty the nation itself, which consists of equal citizens.

32

As Article 1 of the 1921 Constitution, which formed the basis of the War of Independence and the Republic's establishment, states: "Sovereignty belongs to the nation with no reservations or conditions."



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This founding principle, which remains equally valid today as the day of its proclamation, shall no doubt be our guidance in the future.

34

State institutions and organs are not a means to imposing hegemony over the people.

35

All such state institutions must exclusively serve the nation. As such, the people are in command of the country and the state acts as their servants.

36

No authority, junta, guardianship regime, shadow state or bureaucratic elite that does not derive its legitimacy from the people or is being monitored and approved by the people can exercise partial or complete sovereignty.

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We condemn all kinds of coups and interventions, just like the direct ones we experienced on 27 May 1960, 12 March 1971 and 12 September 1980 and indirect ones on 28 February 1997, 27 April 2007, as well as shadowy associations within states which were organized in an attempt to overthrow legitimately elected governments. We hereby declare that, as pro-democracy forces deriving their legitimacy from the people, we shall stand in solidarity against similar transgressions in the future.

38

We believe democracy is a sacred trust given to us by the people of Anatolia, and we recognize the noble example of the brave women of Mersin-Arslanköy, who stood up for their election rights in the 1947 local elections by shielding the ballot boxes from attempts to destroy their votes.



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This trust given to us by earlier generations, who all embraced their right to vote by protecting it in each election since 1950, has consolidated our democracy. Free and transparent elections will continue to serve as a core component of Turkey's political stability..

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In this sense, the right to elect public officials and run for public office, which the ballot box symbolizes, represents a fundamental right of all citizens that cannot, by any means, be restricted, infringed upon or ignored.

41

Pluralist democracy is the crowning achievement of our Republic, and as such it represents an irreversible process.



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The Republic safeguards our collective identity while democracy guarantees our differences within this unity.

43

Our ultimate goal is the practice of pluralistic, egalitarian and participatory democracy living up to universal values standards in all aspects of life.

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While we maintain all aspects of representative democracy, new channels of participation enabled by technological developments shall be promoted to consolidate participatory democracy and apply the principle of local self-government to the grassroots level.



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In this sense, we shall facilitate the strengthening of civil society, which forms the basis of participatory and pluralistic democracy, and eliminate all hurdles before their more active participation in democratic government.

46

There shall be no power in Turkey's constitutional order, which firmly rests upon the principle of separation of powers, immune to monitoring and accountability on the basis of democracy, the rule of law, and popular sovereignty.

47

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, which derives its power from the nation through elections, cannot face pressure from any authority whatsoever in performing its legislative duty.



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In the aftermath of the June 7 elections, the Parliament's foremost duty will be to draft the country's first civilian constitution in a spirit of harmony and democratic compromise. We invite all political parties and the civil society to contribute to this emerging consensus.

49

Upon adoption of a new constitution, the Parliament will continue to serve its legislative and monitoring functions, which shall be open to checks and balances within the aforementioned constitutional framework.

50

An independent Judiciary represents a core principle within the framework of democracy and the rule of law.



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This Independence of Judiciary shall be safeguarded not only in its relations with other constitutional powers but also against certain organizations which may arise within this branch itself. Attempt to form a juristocracy shall be prevented.

52

The principle of impartiality of the judges, which complements judiciary's independence, safeguards human dignity on the basis of the law and justice.

53

We shall provide the judicial system with the necessary functionality to allow each judge to rule independently in accordance with objective legal norms. Court decisions shall be open to scrutiny within the limits of democracy and the rule of law.

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As a result of post-coup interventions to put restraints on elected government, Turkey's parliamentary system has drifted apart from its essence and operational principles. As seen in a series of events leading to the 2001 economic crisis, certain constitutional contradictions, have arisen between the office of the Prime Minister, which, albeit exercising limited power, holds all legal and political responsibility for its actions, and the Presidency, which is equipped with vast powers despite bearing no responsibility for its deeds.

55

The administrative system and the executive branch, which suffer from questions about their official mandate, require reorganization.



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The clarify of the constitutional balance between authority and responsibility of the executive branch represents an absolute necessity in order to institute efficient government and accountability.

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In the aftermath of the 2007 constitutional reforms and the direct election of the President's by the people in 2014, we find it necessary to restructure the administrative system in accordance with a presidential system so that we can address questions about balance of powers and dispel confusions about accountability as well as checks and balances.



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We imagine the presidential system to be a model of government wherein the legislative and executive branches remain independently active, with the necessary checks and balances are in place, and diverse social groups enjoy political representation within a liberal constitutional framework.

59

We call on all political groups and components of civil society to contribute to this process of constitutional restructuring on the basis of efficient government and accountability.

60

Regardless of the circumstances, the executive, like legislative and judicial branches of government, shall be subject to constitutional monitoring.



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61

The civilian and military bureaucracy, which represent the executive branch's instruments of power, trace their roots back to our ancient political culture and serve according to the rational and professional rules of modern bureaucracy in line with the principles of excellence and merit.

62

Members of the bureaucracy, who are accountable by virtue of their functions and duties, report to the elected civilian government.

63

Only members of the executive branch, who have rightfully been granted due powers by the people through democratic elections, can exercise such public authority.



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64

No form of shadowy associations may be tolerated within the bureaucracy. The government shall take necessary steps to prevent practices within the bureaucratic hierarchy which disrupt the state's order.

65

The driving force behind Turkey's economy, which did not accumulate capital through colonialism and does not benefit from rich natural resources, consists of its liberal democracy, educated and dynamic people, and geoeconomically unique location.

66

Today, all modern cases clearly indicate that economic development of a country is directly linked to democracy and the rule of law.



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67

It is impossible for countries to attract long-term investments nor achieve sustainable development in the absence of clear and transparent legal rules.

68

We will maintain and further the close connection between democratization and economic development, as we have established over the past twelve years.

69

We believe that the fight against prohibition, corruption and poverty represents a crucial part of our efforts to protect society's moral fabric, strike a healthy socio-economic balance based on the fair distribution of income, and strengthen the relationship between democracy and development.



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70

There is no source of economic power more important and lasting than human capital. Over the past twelve years, Turkey evolved from a lower middle income country to an upper middle country in terms of per capita income. Our goal is to take the current level of development to the next level and become a high income country before further delay.

71

In accordance with Turkey's 2023 objectives, the Second Period of Progress will concentrate on people-oriented development.

72

As such, our 2023 perspective places education as a lifelong process that equips the people with the necessary skills to compete at the global level, at the center of our human development agenda.



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73

By providing major incentives for R&D and high-tech investments, we will transform Turkey from a technology consumer into a technology developer. Quantitative development will lead to qualitative development.

74

Healthcare policies and welfare state mechanisms represent a core component of our notion of politics and development strategy, which rest on the principle of human dignity.

75

The state has a responsibility to take all measures necessary to promote the physical, spiritual and intellectual development of young people, who safeguard the nation's future.



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76

Our government's primary objectives include the strengthening of women's social standing, the development of social safety nets and the enhancement of their prominence in decision-making processes, which have been constitutionally guaranteed through positive discrimination.

77

The state has not only a constitutional duty but also a moral obligation to eliminate all obstacles before the participation of disabled citizens in public life.

78

We will make the best use of Turkey's geographic location, which lies at the intersection of Asia, Europe and Africa as well as prominent waterways and economic centers, in developing energy, agricultural and trade strategies.

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We will assume a pioneering role in the transition from the ancient Silk Road to global energy hubs and trade routes, and strive to promote regional peace through mutual economic dependence.

80

With regard to the economy, our ultimate goal is to reach a level of development which will allow citizens across the country to lead an honorable life by global standards and thus, to attain and surpass the vision of the Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, by becoming one of the world's top ten economies.

81

Reducing the dependence on outside countries in the national defense industry, where Turkey's economic power and national security needs coincide, represents a core pillar of the nation's future.



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82

This government will build the security infrastructure necessary to make sure that Turkey, which is currently surrounded by a ring of fire due to ongoing crises in the region, shall remain an island of stability.

83

Our main goal is to secure an honorable position for the nation in the international arena based on the historical and strategic depth of Turkish foreign policy and in accordance with the country's political and economic objectives.

84

Building on the core principles and spirit of the War of Independence, Turkey's foreign policy will continue to adopt a value-based approach, which promotes human dignity and rights, and advocates solidarity with oppressed and aggrieved nations.



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Our government will implement the aforementioned approach through realistic foreign policy practices to develop an our distinctive vision that contributes to regional and global peace.

86

Building on the Turkey's diverse history and geography, we shall remain committed to a dynamic and multi-dimensional approach to foreign policy.

87

In this regard, Turkey will actively utilize its membership in international organizations and alliances to contribute to peace and stability around the world while maintaining its strategic perspective on European Union membership.



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We shall further strengthen the High Level Cooperation Councils with our neighbors.

89

Turkey will consolidate its pioneering and visionary role in geographically proximate regions including the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East to ensure lasting peace and stability. Our government will take all necessary steps to promote peace and harmony in the Islamic world, which recently experienced domestic tensions, and friendly nations.

90

Our government is committed to diversifying opening policies which have been developed in Africa, Asia and Latin America.



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91

We strongly believe that Turkey's humanitarian operations in nearby conflict zones and desperate parts of the world such as the African continent, which are part and parcel of the country's diplomacy of conscience, will leave their mark on friendly nations.

92

Our actions with regard to various aspects of foreign policy will reflect a holistic strategy which will transform Turkey into a global power.

93

No country in the world enjoys the fortune and experience of Turkey with regard to civilizational heritage.



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94

Turkey's territories witnessed the ancient, modern and global stages of human history. From Çatalhöyük, the birthplace of the first agricultural community, to Ottoman Istanbul, the final and most colorful example of antiquity, came to life in this part of the world, which set the stage for the most comprehensive encounter between modernity and antiquity. Today, we experience all dynamic processes associated with globalization most deeply and closely.

95

The natural result of this vast experience, in whose source lies a deep understanding of mankind, time and space, is our sensitivity toward a certain awareness about urban space and the environment.



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The protection of the environment and nature, which form the ontological basis of our existence, is our obligation toward future generations. The future of Turkey's air, water, soil, sun, rivers, mountains, forests and plains depends on the consciousness of its citizens and the authority of its government.

97

Considering that Turkey has a most ancient urban culture in architectural, human and social terms, we must protect our rich culture to open up our cities to humanity's legacy while keeping the urban consciousness alive in the face of globalization's challenges.



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98

The principle of unity in diversity forms the basis of Turkey's culture, which derives from this great experience.

99

In line with this principle, we shall take necessary steps to facilitate a great cultural awakening with an internalizing and embracing approach. This cultural blend shall alienate not discriminate against the legacy of any civilization and make original contributions to mankind's universal culture. At a time of existential crises, we shall pioneer the call for a new civilization on the basis of human dignity.



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Turkey, with its rich culture, experience with liberal democracy, strong economy, human-centered sense of politics, strong social fabric, dynamic population and active foreign policy, is an honorable member of the international community and a rising power of the global order. The 2023 contract, which rests upon the principle of human dignity, shall carry our ascent into the future.

Ahmet DAVUTOĞLU
CHAIR OF AK PARTY,
PRIME MINISTER OF
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

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