



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **TURKISH AMERICAN GEZI PLATFORM URGES US GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT EFFORTS IN BRINGING BACK DEMOCRACY AND RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS TO TURKEY**

**San Francisco, CA** – In light of the bombings on peaceful protesters in Ankara on October 10, that left 97 dead, and 246 injured, Turkish American Gezi Platform asks for immediate support of groups working to bring back democracy and human rights to Turkey.

Only 5 months after the elections in June, Turkey will again go to polls for parliamentary elections on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. This is a very critical development for the region and the US as Turkey has long been a US ally, a NATO member and an agent of stability in the Middle East. Turbulence in Turkey will inevitably lead to further instability in the region, which is damaging to US interests.

We, at Turkish American Gezi Platform, a nonprofit organization inspired by the Gezi Park freedom movement in Istanbul, view President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's autocratic regime as a serious threat to Turkey's hopes of becoming a democratic and secular country, and would like to inform the American public of the potential dangers posed by his regime and his party, Justice and Development Party (AKP).

The previous general elections in June 2015 resulted in AKP losing the majority of the votes. Since no political party gained enough seats to control the executive branch, a coalition government was inevitable. A coalition government is not acceptable for Pres. Erdogan as it provides the opportunity to investigate the staggering corruption against the members of his family and his party, whose names are comingled with countless corruption scandals. These investigations and ensuing lawsuits could start an avalanche that will inevitably reach Mr. Erdogan's office. A coalition government can easily dig for clues and establish a case for the past illegal practices of Mr. Erdogan and the AKP government.

Mr. Erdogan's AKP regime has been in power since 2002. Corrupted by the power he has consolidated over time, AKP has violated the constitution in numerous occasions and has profoundly altered the structure of the government to fit Mr. Erdogan's family and his close allies' interests in AKP while having amassed amazing wealth and power.

To avoid being investigated and continue to cover his tracks, Mr. Erdogan is pushing the country to an early election. To avert attention from real problems, and attract the votes he has lost in the last elections, he is raging a war against the Kurdish population. The Peace Process between the Kurdish terrorist organization PKK and the AKP regime, which Mr. Erdogan himself used to be the champion of, is broken by both sides. As a result, the provoked PKK is attacking Turkish police and military along with civilians, while holding towns and villages under siege. This is exactly what the Erdogan regime was hoping for. The unrest and curfews are in regions that voted 90% against him, and the recent chaotic situation will make the election process very difficult, if not impossible.

Unfortunately, regardless of the results of the elections, Mr. Erdogan's polarizing politics leave no breathing room for a democracy and its mechanisms of checks and balances to function. If AKP wins the majority of the seats in the parliament there will be no significant change in the unrest and the slide towards further instability will continue. November election results most likely will not lead to any significant changes. Turkey will face the same challenges as

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today, along with a coalition government, which Mr. Erdogan sees as a threat to himself and his family. He is willing to do whatever is necessary, including rigging the election or to stop it from happening.

Turkey's politics will not calm down until the Erdogan regime leaves the political stage, which may have to wait until 2019, the end of his presidential term. His manipulative party is holding Turkish politics and democracy hostage, which is made possible by the divided opposition.

We are looking for the support of the American people and the US government on our efforts to bring back democracy to Turkey. The recent history is riddled with bad outcomes when democratic countries aid oppressive regimes, and it is time to help people who believe in human rights, women's equality and democracy in every part of the world. Much harm has come to our country for having done the opposite in the past.

***About TAGP:*** *A San Francisco based non-profit organization founded by an independent group of Turkish-American professionals united to support the Gezi Movement in Turkey, with the hope that these grassroots efforts will contribute to freedom, justice and democracy in Turkey.*

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