

ACTIVITIES OF THE PKK DURING THE 2015 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN TURKEY AND ITS RESULTS

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Özet

Bu makale, 2015 yılında Türkiye'de yapılan parlamento seçimleriyle ilgili olup, her iki seçim süreci de analiz edilmiş ve karşılaştırılmış, Türkiye'nin Kürt problemi, PKK terörü ve bunun sonuçlarından bahs edilmiştir. Bu seçimler sırasında, Türkiye bir kez daha koalisyon hükümetinin kurulması sorunuyla karşılaştı: seçimin ardından 13 yıl içinde Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AK Parti) ilk kez hükümeti tek başına organize edemedi. Türkiye tarihinde ilk kez erken seçimler yapılmış oldu ve bu seçimlerde AK Parti rekor sayıda oy almış oldu. Yapılan araştırmada, yüzde 10'luk oy barajını geçen dört partinin seçim öncesi faaliyetleri, seçim beyannameleri ve taahhütleri, propaganda kampanyaları ve bu partiler için seçim sonuçları, koalisyonun kurulması için uygulanan tedbirler, sonuçları ve koalisyonun oluşmaması nedenleri, erken seçim beyannameleri ve bu seçime hazırlık, seçim sürecini etkileyen faktörler ve erken seçim sonuçları yer almaktadır. 7 Haziran ve 1 Kasım 2015 tarihlerinde yapılan seçimler, Türkiye tarihinde ilk kez uygulanan erken seçimler nedeniyle büyük ilgi çekiyor. AK Parti'nin 1 Kasım seçimlerindeki önemli biçimde ilerlemesi ve kazanılmış rekor oy sayısı, 7 Haziran seçimlerine kıyasla kısa bir süre sonra olmasına rağmen, sonuç ve sebepler açısından analiz edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Türkiye, parlamento seçimleri, HDP, PKK, YDG-H, hendek siyaseti

Abstract

The present article deals with parliamentary elections held in Turkey in 2015, both election processes, Kurdish problem of Turkey, PKK terror and its results were analyzed and compared. During these elections, Turkey one more time encountered the issue of formation of the coalition government: within 13 years of election proses the Justice and Development Party (JDP) for the first time failed to organize the government by itself and the first time in the Turkish history the re-elections were held where the JDP won record number of votes. The list of researched items include the pre-election activity of the four parties which passed the 10 percent votes barrier, their election declarations and pledges, propaganda campaign and results of the elections for these parties, measures implemented for formation of the coalition, their results and reasons of inability of formation the coalition, replicated election decision and preparation for this election, factors affecting the election process, as well as the results of the elections. The elections held in June 7 and November 1, 2015 are of significant interest as the problems occurred happened for the first time in the Turkish history. The JDP's significant progress and winning record number of votes in November 1 elections compared to 7 June elections, despite the short time passed, the data was analyzed in terms of cause and consequences.

Key words: Turkey, parliamentary elections, PDP, PKK, YDG-H, trench policy

Introduction

In modern democracies, issues of interest to elections and their outcomes are important. Turkey, as one of the developed countries of parliamentary democracy, has an exceptional place in this area. In Turkey, elections have always been the essence of power, its duration, form, character and so on has influenced and continues to influence issues. That is why elections are in the spotlight, efforts are being made to organize high-level election campaigns. Political parties and leaders are trying to do their best to win. All this contributes to a significant increase in its impact by putting the issue of political advertising in the forefront. The aforementioned issues sometimes lead to the registration of events and facts that are considered negative in election campaigns. In general, there are no cases that can seriously negatively affect the positive results of the election campaign and people's choice, and the value of the elections not only diminishes, but is even more valuable by increasing voter activity. While this may be due to the political power of stakeholders, on the other hand, it may also be due to the fact that the population expects more from the election results and the resulting government.

1. Preparation for the elections

The 2015 parliamentary elections may be considered one of the most significant events in modern Turkey's history. Voters' participation in voting is also a reason to say this. The fact that more than 80 per cent of voters participated in both campaigns during the year is a clear indication. These elections can also be considered a trial for the Justice and Development Party (JDP, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-AK Parti). The elections took place in two stages. The first phase took place on June 7 and the second one on November 1.

Preparations for the elections, which will take place in June 2015, began in April. Firstly, the list of candidates for election was defined and submitted to the Supreme Electoral Council (SEC, Yüksek Seçim Kurulu-YSK) on 7 April. During the month of April, election declarations of parties were also announced. After the list of the JDP's candidate nominees was announced, on April 15, a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was held in Ankara, and the JDP's 378-page election declaration was announced. The JDP's election declaration consisted of six main titles (Gümüş, Haziran 2015: 7). These included democratization and a new constitutional system, human development and society, a stable and strong economy, knowledge, technology and modern manufacturing, viable cities and a clean environment, and powerful state. One of the headlines that the JDP has promised to carry out after the election was foreign policy and the other five were related to domestic politics. The Declaration, which sets itself the target of 2023, also aims to achieve the creation of a more powerful, selective, democratic Turkey, to be an exemplary country with its economy, level of knowledge and technology, politics, social and cultural life. In other words, the JDP's election declaration is a document that underlies the 13-year rule of power and is intended to be implemented by 2023 (İşte AK Parti'nin 7 Haziran seçim beyanamesi, [erişim tarihi: 24.07.2019](http://www.pearsonjournal.com/)).

In addition to the JDP's declaration, another document "New Turkey Dialogue 2023" was prepared and presented to the public on April 15 (Yeni Türkiye sözleşmesi 2023, [erişim tarihi: 24.07.2019](#)). This document, which was prepared by Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, points to important details in the adoption of a new constitution, as well as ideas, beliefs, expressions, etc. was regarded as a key element of human freedom, and repeated the condemnation of all coup attempts (2015'te Türkiye, 2015:19). However, no specific promises have been made to improve the socio-economic status of the population, which has been implemented by the JDP in its time to implement the major outreach program and the implementation of major projects by 2023. It should be noted that these issues are one of the main factors affecting the behavior of the population during the voting, which has affected the results of the elections.

On April 19, 2015, an election declaration of the Republican People's Party (RPP, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi-CHP) was announced. This declaration is the most detailed and comprehensive election document of the RPP in recent years. The 203-page declaration can be regarded as the most important indicator of an economy-oriented election strategy by defining the power of the RPP. The RPP Secretary-General Kemal Kılıçdaroglu said in his statement that the election would provide a wide range of social benefits and financial support for the disabled, women, soldiers, the elderly and mothers (Özkan, Ocak 2016:17). Other key elements of the election declaration are pledges to eliminate the existing pressures. The RPP's election declaration states that interest rates will be written off, the oil will be 1.5 TL and so on. There were some other economic-oriented promises in that document. In general, the core of the RPP's election campaign was economic issues and voters were trying to attract with economic promises.

Although the Nationalist Movement Party (NMP, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi- MHP) submitted its candidate list to the SEC in April, the election declaration was announced late on May 3, compared to the other parties, and this was not rated positively. The Declaration outlines the economic interests of the electorate. The NMP election declaration is based on five major projects (Çetin, Haziran 2015:19). These include public and administrative reform during the period of public repairs, the production economy program, the project against poverty, the project on combating terrorism and national unity, the fight against bribery, the establishment of morals and quality. The NMP has also criticized the government's policy on the Kurdish issue, in addition to disclosing the economic promises set out in the election campaign statement, and criticized R. T. Erdogan, A. Davutoglu, and the JDP in general.

The Kurdish oriented Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP, Halkların Demokratik Partisi-HDP) election declaration was presented to the public on April 21, 2015 under the slogan "We are to Parliament". The election declaration includes democracy, democratic constitution, political parties and electoral law, judicial reform, democratic autonomy and territorial democracy, the Kurdish problem and settlement process, equal, independent and peaceful foreign policy, human rights, freedom of religion and equality, and so on consisting of the main titles. Analyzing PDP's election declaration, Professor Haluk Alkan (Haziran 2015:24-25) notes that the Declaration has a centralist-hierarchical and generalist Marxist-modernist approach to economic and social policy, as well as other issues, it is possible to say that was included as a declaration. The election declaration, in addition to the

Kurdish voters who voted for the PDP, appealed to the JDP and R. T. Erdogan's opponents, the Alawites and the secular masses. The Declaration emphasized the importance of strengthening the parliamentary system. Although the election declaration contained promises of democracy and fundamental rights, the failure of the PDP to maintain ties with the PKK terrorist organization posed a risk that Turkey would again face violence if PDP did not pass the barrier (2015'te Türkiye, 2015:66).

In the pre-election campaign, the parties increased their activity. This can be seen in rallies organized by them. The rallies started in April and lasted until June 6. The JDP was ahead of the rallies. JDP Secretary General and Prime Minister A. Davutoglu organized 110 rallies in 81 provinces of Turkey. For comparison, RPP Secretary General K. Kılıçdaroglu 78, NMP Secretary General D. Bahçeli 54, and HDP Co-Chairmen S. Demirtaş and F. Yüksekdağ held 66 rallies (2015'te Türkiye, 2015: 20).

2. First phase of election

The next elections to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Parliament) on June 7, 2015 were not as successful as expected for the JDP. In total, there were only four political parties that passed a 10 per cent threshold in the election, which was attended by 21 political parties and 166 independent candidates. Of these, the JDP gained 258 seats, with 40.9 per cent (compared to 49.83 per cent in the 2011 election), the RPP – 132, with 25 per cent, the NMP – 80, with 16.3 per cent, the PDP gained 80 seats, with 13.1 per cent (2015 seçim sonuçları açıklandı!, erişim tarihi:03.04.2019). Voter turnout was 83.3 per cent. According to the results of the June 7, 2015 elections, the JDP failed to win seats in 5, RPP in 38, NMP in 34, and PDP in 55 provinces. The provinces where the JDP did not win seats were Tunceli, Ağrı, Hakkari, Şırnak and Iğdır. However, a significant decrease in the number of MPs in the three major provinces has been reported. Thus, the number of MPs in Ankara dropped to 15 (in 2011 election it was 17), 39 in Istanbul, where there are 85 seats at all (in 2011 it was 46), and 8 in Izmir (in 2011 it was 11). A significant decrease in the number of MPs in the eastern and southeastern Anatolia may be explained by an increase in the number of MPs of the PDP in the region. The same can be said for Istanbul. Thus, PDP was the third party to win the most votes in Istanbul, leaving behind the NMP. Of the 11 seats in Diyarbakır, the PDP won 10 seats, only 1 remaining seat the JDP, in Van the PDP won 7 seats out of the 8 seats and the JDP only 1 seat. In Mardin, the 3 seats of the JDP in 2011 have also dropped to 1. Overall, 53 per cent of the votes earned by the PDP were recorded at the expense of voters who voted for the JDP in the 2011 election (2015'te Türkiye, 2015:21).

The failure of the JDP in these elections is also reflected in the press of the leading world countries, which have shown great interest in the parliamentary elections in Turkey. CNN, BBC, Reuters, New York Times, The Associated Press, The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, Der Spiegel, Bild, Die Welt, Die Zeit, El País covering the election results in Turkey and regarded it as a failure for the JDP and R. T. Erdogan, who intends to make changes to the constitution in the country, while at the same time, the election of the pro-Kurdish PDP exceeds the 10 per cent threshold as a surprise of the election (Dış basından seçim sonuçları hakkında ilk yorum, [erişim tarihi: 25.07.2016](#)). Spain's El País newspaper, striving to draw particular attention to the violations committed during the elections, noted that political

polarization and interference in the elections were growing in the face of the increasing pressure of R. T. Erdogan and the JDP (Seim Sonuları Dış Basında Nasıl Yer Aldı?, [erişim tarihi: 25.07.2016](#)).

The reasons for the failure of the JDP's research have been related to a number of stagnation in party organizations, problems in the political language of the JDP members, and the impact of opposition parties on populist declarations (Aslan, Ekim 2015:29). Although the JDP won first place in the polls but failed to gain 50 per cent of seats in the Parliament, it was impossible to establish a single-party government for the first time in 13 years. Therefore, the issue of forming a coalition government came to the fore. In this case, if the opposition parties had agreed, the JDP would not have been able to elect the speaker of parliament alone. However, in the first round of the June 30 parliamentary elections, the opposition parties came to a common denominator and failed to identify a single candidate. One of the main reasons for this was that the NMP did not continue its pre-election policies against R. T. Erdogan and the JDP in general after the election. As a result, İsmet Yılmaz, the JDP's candidate, was elected chairman of the parliament. Then, on July 9, President R. T. Erdogan was tasked with establishing the 63rd government, Secretary General of the JDP, he instructed A. Davutoğlu. Thus began the approximately 45-day period when the constitutionally-defined coalitions were being held.

3. Attempts to form a coalition government

A special delegation of the JDP has been set up to conduct the coalition talks. Ahmed Davutoğlu, the party's leader, also began talks with the other three party leaders to form a coalition government, and the process continued until mid-August. The possible coalition could have come about as a result of the merger of the JDP with any other party because of its dominance in the number of MPs. Negotiations and discussions were held first with the RPP and later with the other two parties. On July 14, A. Davutoğlu held a coalition talks with the Secretary General of the NMP, D. Bahçeli (Davutoğlu açıkladı: İşte Bahçeli'nin kararı, [erişim tarihi 18. 08. 2019](#)). But it later became clear that the NMP would not join the coalition with the JDP. However, the commission which created for the coalition continued its work. Meetings, negotiations and discussions of this type were also held with representatives of the RPP and the PDP. However, they did not change the PDP's policy against the JDP. Thus, the emergence of any coalition with NMP and PDP emerged. The only way to form a coalition was to negotiate with the RPP. The RPP has prepared the 14 principles for the talks and the JDP has 10 principles. From July 13 to early August, various meetings were held to establish a coalition between the two parties. The last such meeting took place on August 13 between A. Davutoğlu and K. Kılıçdaroğlu. At a press conference following the meeting, it was announced the impossibility of forming a coalition (Erken seçim ne zaman? [erişim tarihi: 12.05.2018](#)) The main difference between these parties was the issue of presidential elections. The RPP wanted to return to the previous system and called for the president to be elected by parliament. During a meeting with the NMP leader on August 17, Davutoğlu said it was impossible to establish a coalition and announced his resignation on August 18. Thus, despite various meetings and negotiations, ideological and political differences made it difficult for coalitions to be formed, which eventually led to the decision to hold new elections.

4. Kurdish problem and “solution process”.

On the eve of the 2015 elections, Turkey faced a number of problems waiting to be resolved. Kurdish nationalism and the Kurdistan Workers' Party - PKK (Kurdish - Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan) occupy a special place among them. PKK founded in November 1978 and in August 1984 announced Kurdish uprising. Kurdish problem is a complex problem with ethnic, political, legal, socio-cultural and socio-psychological dimensions. The Kurdish issue and the PKK Kurdish ethnic movements fed, once in Turkey, organized in neighboring countries and in Europe and has become an international terrorist organization engaged in actions. It is more correct to consider the Kurdish problem as a political problem between the Kurds and the State. By making use of this political problem, the PKK aims to eliminate the coexistence of Turks and Kurds.

PKK terror organisation is one of the biggest obstacles of to the advancement of Turkey's economy, social and political aspects and also solving Kurdish problem. Turkey has continued since thirty six years-the spiritual and material cost is too high had to finish the PKK. The number of civil servants martyred due to terrorism is 7918, the number of PKK members killed 22101, the number of civilians killed 5557. The number of internal executions and other perpetrators of PKK is unknown. Except for deaths not reflected in the statistics, 35576 people have lost their lives in the last thirty years due to terrorism. In addition, 386360 people voluntarily or compulsorily migrated from their places of residence. The total cost to Turkey of PKK terrorism is claimed to be about \$ 400 billion (Bahar, 2013:75).

It is also complicating efforts to stage Syrian peace talks. “The international community should call on both the Turkish government and the PKK for a ceasefire and a return to healthy negotiations, and they must make this call repeatedly,” S. Demirtash, co-leader of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), told Reuters. “Turkey's domestic peace is not an issue for Turkey alone. It is directly related to the resolution of the Syrian conflict and to the migration problem in Europe,” he said in an interview on Wednesday in Brussels, where he was participating in a Kurdish conference in the European parliament, January 27, 2016 (Knutson, erişim tarihi: 30.05.2020). According to the article of Hanna Knutson, the conflict with the PKK, after the breakdown of a two-and- a-half-year ceasefire, has complicated efforts by a U.S.-led international coalition, of which Turkey is a member, to fight Islamic State. Turkey, the United States and European Union all classify the PKK - which says it is fighting for Kurdish autonomy - as a terrorist organization. But Washington sees the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party – PYD (Kurdish - Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat, founded in September 2003 in northern Syria), which has links to the PKK, as a useful ally. Ankara views it as a terrorist group and does not want it making territorial gains that could stoke Kurdish separatism at home (Knutson, erişim tarihi: 30.05.2020).

As World Views noted earlier, the territorial gains made by Syrian Kurdish militias over the past two years had ripple effects across the border. The Turkish government, which has spent decades attempting to subdue Kurdish separatist ambitions, looked on with horror as the PYD, a Syrian Kurdish faction historically linked to the PKK, emerged as a key player in northern Syria. The PYD's role on the front lines of the war against the Islamic State endeared it to the West, including the United States, which gave it aid. "Ankara's real fear is that the PYD's success in Syria will dangerously

strengthen the PKK in its fight against Turkey," writes Nicholas Danforth, a Turkey scholar at the Bipartisan Policy Center (Tharoor, erişim tarihi: 30.05.2020).

Generally, a number of steps have been taken since the early days of the JDP government to address the Kurdish problem, and this process has been referred to as a "peace process" ("barış süreci") or "solution process" ("çözüm süreci") in the community. First step for this process made by Turkish government. The process started at the beginning of 2013. The operations of Turkish military forces against PKK might also cause to start this process. In 2012, approximately 1,500 terrorists, including those who were dead, injured and surrendered, were eliminated by carrying out operations in the PKK camps in Northern Iraq. This figure corresponds to approximately one third of the mountain staff of the PKK. In addition, the security forces' entry into caves that have not been entered for many years and the operations of drug raw material production and drug trafficking, which are an important source of income for the terrorist organization, have caused a serious blow to the organization's income sources, especially in the country (Bahar, 2013:92).

At the meeting of Prime Minister R. T. Erdogan with the NGOs and opinion leaders on Erciyes Mountain in Kayseri in 11th of February 2013, he said: "I will do whatever is necessary to end terrorism. I will drink poison to end terrorism. I will drink this poison if I know I'm going to die" (Zehir iç deseler içerim: 4, erişim tarihi: 30.05.2020). Finally, on 21 March 2013, after months of negotiations with the Turkish Government, Abdullah Ocalan's message to the people was read both in Turkish and Kurdish during the Nowruz celebrations in Diyarbakır. The letter called a cease-fire that included disarmament and withdrawal from Turkish soil and calling an end to armed struggle. PKK announced that they would obey, stating that the year of 2013 is the year of solution either through war or through peace. R.T. Erdogan welcomed the letter stating that concrete steps will follow PKK's withdrawal. On April 4, the government announced list of "wise men"- such a commission made up of intellectuals, writers and academics and well-liked public figures, the members of a seven-region commission tasked with explaining the ongoing settlement process with the PKK to the public and promoting the negotiations. The committee is comprised of 63 "wise men" from seven regions of Turkey (Wise men committee members announced, erişim tarihi: 28.05.2020).

Some political parties and politicians criticized the solution process and negotiations with PKK. Professor dr. Halil Ibrahim Bahar writes for this issue (Bahar, 2013:99): "The government does not only talk about the PKK problem with the PKK and its leaders. The government is also negotiating very important issues regarding the Kurdish issue with the PKK. This is also widely criticized.

The main reasons for criticism are:

-On the one hand, the government tries to end the PKK, on the other hand it strengthens the PKK. Because the PKK writes the steps taken regarding the rights of the Kurds as a profit for its own household.

-The rights of the Kurds are not an issue to negotiate with the PKK.

-The fact that only the PKK is in the process of solution increases the guardianship of the PKK over the Kurds.

-The fact that the PKK monopolizes Kurdish politics causes the Kurds, who were once oppressed under the pressure of the State, to be crushed under the pressure of the PKK.

- Although the PKK issue and the Kurdish issue are intertwined, both issues need to be addressed separately. The PKK issue is a result of the Kurdish issue.

-Talking about the Kurdish rights issue with the PKK or just the BDP prevents the involvement of large Kurdish masses in the process". The law on the solution process, which was sent from the Turkish Grand National Assembly to the President's approval on 11 July, was approved by President Abdullah Gül on 15 July 2014 and published in the Resmi Gazete under the name "Law on Ending Terrorism and Strengthening Social Integration" (Resmi Gazete, 16.07.2014). The government carries out the necessary work on the following issues within the scope of the solution process.

a) Determines the steps to be taken in the fields of political, legal, socioeconomic, psychological, culture, human rights, security and disarmament and related issues related to ending terrorism and strengthening social integration.

b) If deemed necessary, it decides to carry out contact, dialogue, negotiation and similar activities with individuals, institutions and organizations at home and abroad, and assigns individuals, institutions or organizations to carry out these studies.

c) Takes the necessary precautions to ensure the return of the members of the organizations who drop arms home and to participate in social life.

ç) It ensures that the public is informed accurately and timely regarding the actions taken within the scope of this Law.

d) It monitors the results of implementation regarding the measures taken and ensures coordination between the relevant institutions and organizations.

e) Makes the necessary legislative studies.

However, the PKK has begun to use this momentum to reinforce itself. The most important proof of this is the fact that the PKK does not expel its representatives from Turkey, except to formally send several groups to northern Iraq. The "peace process" that has been going on for nearly three years ended with a trench policy. According to some studies, the PDP won more than expected in the June 7, 2015 elections, causing the PKK to panic. Because they saw that their power and influence potential would be reduced. As a result, they again resorted to violence to try to prevent legal policy (Yanmış, 2016:27).

5. Trench policy and its implications

Due to these and other conditions, clashes broke out in Turkey in June 2015 after the first round of parliamentary elections. Members of the YDG-H (Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement), organized in cities such as the PKK's youth organizations, dug trenches in some neighborhoods, building barricades and fighting security forces (Yanmış, 2016:3). All that process started with Ceylanpinar incidents. These incidents happened on 22-24 July 2015 in Ceylanpinar Şanlıurfa province (Turkey). Background of this incident was Suruc bombing in Şanlıurfa province on 20th of July 2015, outside the Amara Culture Centre. 33 people were killed and 104 were reported injured in this bombing. Most victims were university students who

were giving a press statement on their planned trip to reconstruct the Syrian border town of Kobani, which is approximately 10 km from Suruc, was until January under siege by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) forces. They had travelled from İstanbul to Suruc to participate in three to four days of rebuilding work in Kobani, and had been staying at Amara Cultural Centre while preparing to cross the border. The next day, ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack (Taylor, erişim tarihi: 28.05.2020). It has been argued that ISIS willfully wanted to put pressure on the Turkey-Kurdish peace process and succeeded in its aim to stir conflict between them. The Ceylanpinar incidents followed this, which were a series of events starting with an assassination on Turkish police, and which lead to resuming the Turkey-PKK conflict. The attack as used by the Turkish government as *casus belli* to drop the otherwise largely successful 2013-2015 Solution process and resume war on PKK militants. The bombing resulted in a new escalation between Turkey and ISIL, with Turkish soldiers and ISIL militants directly engaging in the border town of Kilis on 24 July 2015. This led to Turkey launching a series of airstrikes against mostly Kurdish militant positions in Northern Iraq and Syria. The operation was named after Yalçın Nane ("Operation Martyr Yalcin"), a non-commissioned military officer who was killed during Turkish army's first gunfight with ISIL on the border in the province of Kilis on July 23 (Turkish airstrikes target ISIL in Syria, erişim tarihi: 30.05.2020).

More than 100 security officials and approximately the number of civilians in various provinces, over 250,000 people have been displaced or left their homes for a period of up to 5 months during these events, presented by the Kurds in the international community as "self-defense" has led to the destruction of more than 800 organization member. In addition, because of protracted street protests, PKK boycotts, and other types of conflicts the socio-economic life in the region have been paralyzed.

As of June 2015, trenches were dug, barricades were established, and local self-government was formed in 7 provinces in southern and southeastern Turkey (Hakkari, Shirnak, Mardin, Diyarbakir, Mush, Batman, Elazig). In contrast, 58 commandant hours were announced in those provinces and 19 settlements, both short and long-term. (Yanmış, 2016:36-37).

However, the trench policy had a severe impact on the socio-economic status of the people. This policy did not affect positively to the pro-Kurdish political party, PDP. In those areas, PDP has already earned an average of more than 70 per cent of votes. The population of the areas affected by the trench policy is more than 1.3 million. The region's total population is more than 4.7 million people (Türkiye'nin il il nüfus sayıları açıklandı. İşte illerin nüfusu, erişim tarihi: 24.07.2019).

According to a report by the Turkish Human Rights Foundation on March 22, 2016, in total 63 commandant hours were announced, at least 310 civilians have been killed in 7 provinces and 22 districts (Hendek operasyonları, erişim tarihi: 02.04.2019). As a result of ongoing operations until mid-2016, the PKK was forced to withdraw from city centers.

6. Second phase of elections

On August 24, President R. T. Erdogan announced the decision to hold a repeat election based on the constitution for the first time in Turkey's history. A. Davutoglu was again entrusted to head the government to be set

up to conduct the November 1 elections. The RPP and the NMP have not yet joined the government in advance, and the government began its operation on August 28, including the JDP, PDP and independent candidates. Meanwhile, the 5th Congress of the JDP was held on September 12. At the congress, A. Davutoglu was re-elected general secretary by a majority of votes. In addition, there have been 3 major policy changes in Congress. These included the establishment of an ethical body, the involvement of new leaders, and the elimination of the third term. On September 18, the JDP announced a candidate list. Of the candidates, 312 were nominated in June and the rest were new. In addition, the number of female candidates was reduced from 99 to 69. In addition, candidates in several eastern and southeastern provinces were updated.

On October 4, the JDP's election declaration was announced, where economic promises were given priority. These were the essence of some kind of reply to the economic promises of opposition during first phase of elections. The rallies started on 5 October. However, the October 10 peace rally in Ankara and the deaths of 95 people caused some interruptions in the process. In general, the terrorist acts of Suruc on July 20 and Ankara on October 10, in some respects, have had some impact on the outcome of the elections. Thus, in the opinion of the population, the absence of a stable government facilitated this activity (2015'te Türkiye, 2015:70).

The November 1, 2015 elections ended with the victory of the JDP. As a result of the vote, the JDP gain 317 seats with 49.5 per cent of the vote, the RPP - 134 with 25.3 per cent of the vote, the NMP - 59, with 11.9 per cent of the vote, and the PDP - 59 seats with 10.8 per cent of the vote (2015 Genel Seçim Sonuçları, erişim tarihi: 3.04.2019). Voter turnout increased by 87.6 percent. As a result of this election, the JDP won a record - 23.7 million votes. The JDP, which won first place in 62 provinces of Turkey, received all the deputy mandates in 17 provinces. A relative increase was recorded in the eastern and southeastern regions. The number of MPs rose from 39 to 46 in Istanbul on November 1, from 15 to 16 in Ankara, and from 1 to 2 in Van and Diyarbakir. As a result, in Turkey, the JDP won again with great advantage. According to the results of these elections, the total number of female deputies was 14.9 per cent of all MPs with 82 members. According to the UN, Turkey ranks 91st in the world in terms of female representation in parliament (Kadın vekil oranı düştü, erişim tarihi: 13.04.2019). On November 12, the SEC announced the official results and on November 17 President R. T. Erdogan instructed the JDP Secretary General A. Davutoglu to form the 64th government. Finally, on November 30, the 64th government was formed by gaining the confidence of the Parliament. Thus, the JDP's single-party government was again established in Turkey.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the aforementioned, the parliamentary elections and Kurdish problem are still one of the most pressing issues of modern Turkey's political life. The Turkish public still shows confidence and great interest in the elections and its results as an expression of their socio-economic and political interests. All this contributes to the positive development of parliamentary democracy in the country. In this regard, the 2015 elections can be considered unique. That year, for the first time in Turkey's history, elections were held again. The JDP's long-term sovereignty

was under a threat. This issue has once again proved the relevance of the JDP's reassessment of its activities, as well as the analysis of other parties' relations and political activities. While the JDP's victory in the re-election results alone, it does not mean that the opposition has some shortcomings in its activities, but it should also be a guide for the JDP to draw certain conclusions. The results of the elections confirmed that the JDP was still a strong political party for the Turkish community, but showed that the population was not clearly aware of the constitutional changes. The elections confirmed that the population regarded the coalition government as a threat to political and economic stability. On the other hand, the representation of PDP, a pro-Kurdish political party in parliament, suggests that they act as an important political force and that the population is loyal to it. Finally, it is possible to note that although the opposition RPP has maintained its position in both elections, there have been significant reductions in the vote and the number of seats in the November elections, thanks to the NMP and PDP demonstrating a disproportionate and changing position.

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