

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2ND LEGISLATIVE YEAR OF THE 28TH TERM OF THE
GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TÜRKİYE (OCTOBER 1, 2023)**

My Honorable Nation,

Honorable Speaker,

Distinguished Members of the Grand National Assembly,

I salute you with my most heartfelt feelings and affection.

I hope that the 2nd Legislative Year of the 28th Term of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye will bring good tidings to all members of parliament as well as our country and nation.

I would like to begin by thanking all our citizens who strengthened our democracy further by freely expressing their will at the ballot box in the May 14 and May 28 elections.

I would also like to congratulate the Members of Parliament of the 28th Term as they take their seats in the Assembly to represent the national will.

I would like to express my gratitude to all members of parliament who served our country under the roof of this great institution since the establishment of the Grand National Assembly on April 23, 1920.

I pray for Allah's mercy on all deceased members of parliament who served this Assembly.

I respectfully commemorate Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first Speaker of our Grand National Assembly and the first founder of the national will.

On behalf of my nation, I would like to thank all who work hard in any capacity for the development, growth and strengthening of Türkiye.

I salute the memory of all martyrs and veterans who, in the last one thousand years, valiantly fought to defend our homeland, the unity of our nation and country, and ensured its survival.

May Allah rest the souls of all our martyrs and grant them eternal peace in heaven.

At each inauguration of the Parliament, we feel the same excitement of 103 years ago.

In the new legislative year, I wish success to all members of parliament who will serve under this roof and contribute to our country, nation and cities by submitting proposals, expressing their favorable and dissenting opinions, maintaining close contact with the nation they represent, and by showing their commitment to the supremacy of the national will.

We expect that your ideas and actions will be worthy of our national ideal, the vision of the Century of Türkiye.

The Grand National Assembly is the epitome of our millennia-old state tradition; it represents our quest for democracy in the past two centuries, our Republic which is about to celebrate its centennial, and our democratic practices that began to take shape with the transition to multi-party politics.

In short, this august institution is the greatest legacy of our extraordinary national treasure.

No doubt, all national parliaments are important for their country's history, culture, independence and survival.

However, I believe that the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye is exceptional in this regard.

This Assembly has been honored with the title of veteran twice: the first time during the national struggle and the second time on July 15.

It survived many ordeals from coups to juntas and continues to stand strong.

It is an institution that has always managed to stand with the nation, despite pressure from those keeping it under tutelage.

I have no doubt that our Assembly, which led our epic national struggle to victory amidst shortages, betrayals and evil plots, will continue to shed light for the Century of Türkiye.

We need to firmly teach our children the fact that our Republic, which has now completed its first century, did not just come from nowhere; it was built as the last link of a chain that dates back thousands of years.

I would like to remind all of us, and young people in particular, the following statement made by Ghazi Mustafa Kemal at the rostrum of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on October 29, 1923.

"THE COMPETENCE, CAPACITY AND JUDGMENT OF OUR NATION IN RECENT YEARS HAVE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED HOW WITLESS AND FRIVOLOUS THOSE WHO SUFFER FROM SELF-DOUBT ARE.

OUR NATION, WITH THE NEW FORM OF GOVERNMENT, WILL BE ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE ITS QUALITIES AND MERITS TO THE WORLD OF CIVILIZATION WITH MORE EASE.

THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE AND ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS SHALL BE WORTHY OF THE POSITION IT OCCUPIES IN THE WORLD.

THE VICTORY OF THE TURKISH NATION IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS IS EMBODIED IN THIS AUGUST INSTITUTION AND WILL BE MANIFESTED SEVERAL TIMES OVER IN THE FUTURE.

WE WILL ALWAYS MOVE FORWARD BASED ON THE TRUST OF OUR NATION."

Even though the Republic did not progress at the speed and in the context Ghazi had envisioned, the fact that we meet here with the same feeling a century later shows that the will that founded the Republic is very much alive today.

As a matter of fact, history tells us that most Turkish states established around the world stepped into their first century at the peak of their power.

The fact that our Republic still has a long way to go means that we still have a lot of work to do.

Our Republic was designed "TO BE THERE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO ONE" and will hopefully fully attain this quality in the Century of Türkiye.

Distinguished Members of the Grand National Assembly,

Our determination to realize the Century of Türkiye vision will be firm if we maintain a strong tie between our past and our future.

Therefore, as the nation and its representatives, we must strongly embrace our common goals by transforming our differences into diversity.

In the past 21 years, we took steps to address issues regarding our country's development and democratic infrastructure to prepare the groundwork for greater accomplishments.

There were times when the doors of the parliament were locked, members of parliament were oppressed, prime ministers and ministers were executed and a system of tutelage trampled the national will. Praise be to Allah that those times are over.

The July 15 Epic, which was jointly written by our parliament and nation is an important turning point in this respect.

The Presidential System of Government, which is the culmination of our two-century-old search for a system of government is another important achievement. We crossed another threshold with this transition, which was based on the joint decision of political spheres, the parliament and the nation for the first time.

Now we have a new task and a new opportunity before us.

It is to grant our country a new and civilian constitution as was the case in the first years of the Republic.

This is the only way we can do justice to the principle "SOVEREIGNTY UNCONDITIONALLY BELONGS TO THE NATION", as stated on the plaque behind the Speaker in our General Assembly hall.

It is our primary responsibility to save Türkiye from the current constitutional burden that the September 12 coup administration saddled our nation with 41 years ago.

It is clear that this constitution, which has been patched with more than 20 major and minor amendments in 41 years, cannot support Türkiye in 2023.

We frequently face this fact in many areas and on various occasions, including in the economy, in diplomacy and justice as well as with respect to rights and freedoms.

As a matter of fact, a new constitution has been on the agenda in our country and parliament for about 10 years.

Some steps were taken in this direction even though they remained incomplete.

As the People's Alliance, we made our own preparations for a new constitution in 2021.

Then, we invited other political parties to make their own preparations and share them with the public.

Unfortunately, our friendly invitation was not accepted.

Those who constantly complain that this constitution is the product of a coup did not want to step out of their comfort zone to take concrete steps.

However, we never lost hope.

Every constitution has its own story.

Türkiye was introduced to the 1921, 1924, 1961 and 1982 constitutions under the extraordinary circumstances of their times.

We believe that the current conditions are ripe to present the nation with a constitution which, for the first time, may be a natural outcome of a functioning democratic system.

Turkish democracy is sufficiently mature to end the bad tradition regarding the constitution that began with the coup on May 27, 1960.

There is no doubt that the success of the constitution is measured by how inclusive the language is and the extent to which it is embraced by each political party, social segment and every individual as their own.

If the constitution does not embrace the common history and future of the state and the nation, it will be of no benefit to the country.

I, as the President, and the People's Alliance parties invite all parties, whether they have a group or not, all members of parliament, all segments in society, and anyone who has a constructive opinion or a suggestion on this subject to join our call for a new constitution.

This is a call to all who want a truly national, local, civilian and visionary constitution which is not imposed by coup plotters.

The length and scope of the text, the content of secondary legislation and its character as the joint manifesto of every member of our nation are topics we can discuss, debate and decide together.

All we need is good will and an openness to compromise in line with the fundamental values and red lines of our country and nation for the purpose of achieving the Century of Türkiye.

I have no doubt that we will overcome all other obstacles once we achieve this goal.

Türkiye deserves this constitution which our nation has been yearning for.

Türkiye deserves a future-looking constitution that sheds light to and expands the horizon of our country and society, not one that lags behind.

This noble nation, which defied the death-spewing weapons of the coup plotters on the night of July 15, deserves to crown its struggle for democracy with a civilian constitution.

Let's put a stop to this longing and not delay things any longer.

Let's crown the centennial of our Republic with a new constitution.

I would like to say that we can even take this opportunity to evaluate the need for improvement in the Presidential System of Government in light of the experiences of the first term within the scope of the work towards a new constitution.

In this way, a new constitution can put an end to the discussions around the government system once and for all.

As you can see, we make every effort and are open to compromise to provide our country and our nation a constitution for the Century of Türkiye.

We expect the same constructive approach from other political actors and parties.

Distinguished Members of the Grand National Assembly,

Societies are forged into nations and states not only through collective victory, but also through collective grief.

Türkiye woke up to such a painful day of collective grief on February 6.

The earthquake, which affected 14 million people in 11 cities in our country, took the lives of over 50 thousand people and rendered 850 thousand independent housing units unusable is one of the biggest disasters in our recent history.

There is no other state in the world that could have acted as quickly as we have, when faced with a disaster affecting so many people in such a large area, to provide search and rescue followed by emergency aid and shelter services.

Nevertheless, there were, and perhaps still are, some disruptions, deficiencies, and delays.

Yet the unity, togetherness and solidarity of our nation in the face of this disaster will be remembered for centuries and shall constitute an example to all humanity.

As the state, we have devoted all our resources to the rapid revival of the region.

Food and accommodation services for earthquake victims are provided in a systematic manner.

Nearly 600 thousand citizens are staying in 186 thousand containers set up in the region.

Rental assistance and other methods benefiting 1.3 million citizens in approximately 327 thousand households ensure that no one is left behind.

Our cities are being rebuilt at a rapid pace.

Construction has begun to build more than 200 thousand houses and the applications for rebuilding existing buildings have exceeded 212 thousand.

We will soon begin to complete and deliver housing for the earthquake zone.

We allocated 762 billion liras to the region in this year's additional budget, and this figure will exceed 1 trillion liras in 2024.

One of our priorities in the Medium Term Program announced in the first week of September is to heal the wounds in the earthquake zone.

It is estimated that the total cost of the earthquake for our country will amount to 105 billion dollars.

Such an amount is a huge burden for all economies, including developed countries.

Moreover, Türkiye is waging struggles in the economy as well as in other areas.

Every attack against our country involves some economic plot.

The economic consequences of the crises caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the war to the north make things even more challenging for our country.

As you know, during the global health crisis when the world shut down, we chose to follow a different path by prioritizing employment and production.

Praise be to Allah, this helped us overcome the crisis of the pandemic with minimal damage.

The destabilizing global economic impact of the Russia-Ukraine war is constantly manifested in many areas.

Inflation rates around the world have reached their highest levels in the last 60-70 years.

There are serious problems in many areas, including in food, energy, trade and employment.

No country, including developed nations, can predict the future clearly.

Türkiye is inevitably affected by these challenges.

After the elections, we adopted a policy that takes the current global economic outlook into account as well as the possible threats we may face in the upcoming period.

Our aim is to ensure that our country navigates these difficult times with the least possible loss and, if possible, with the greatest gain.

The strategy to achieve growth through investment, employment, production, exports and current account surplus remain as the backbone of our economic policy.

We are determined to do all we can to eliminate the high cost of living that ails our nation. We work to solve the urgent problems of our country, in particular regarding the earthquake, and aim to ensure growth.

We will not stop or pause until we realize our century-long dream, the Century of Türkiye, along with our goals in other areas.

As concerns regarding the global economy rise, not only do we continue to maintain hope, but we also increasingly transform our ambitions into concrete outputs in many areas including in employment and exports.

We must never forget that the success of the Turkish economy improves the quality of life for all of us and that the opposite shall be costly.

We must refrain from any discourse, attitude or behavior that will damage the trust and stability that lie at the core of the economy.

As politicians, we all have a shared responsibility towards our nation to ensure that our country emerges unscathed from the current global economic storms and arrives safely at harbor.

The attention of the legislative branch to this issue will support the executive branch and boost our morale.

I would like to remind you that we need a similar solidarity in the fight against terrorism.

We have largely solved, within our borders, the separatist terrorist issue that resulted in a heavy toll in terms of loss of life and economic value in the last 40 years.

By eliminating the presence of the terrorist organization outside our borders, we want to completely remove this scourge, which the imperialists have inflicted on the people of the region, from being a source of threat to our country.

In this context, we are making preparations to further the historic political and military successes we have achieved in recent years.

We will continue our fight with determination until the last terrorist, inside or outside the country, is eliminated.

We won't allow the terrorist organization to shape politics and hinder our country's blessed march. This morning's attack, in which two villains were neutralized thanks to the timely response of our security units, is the last flutters of terrorism. The scoundrels who targeted the peace and security of our citizens could not achieve their goals, and they will never achieve them. I pray to Allah for a speedy recovery to the police officers injured in the incident and extend my condolences to our brothers and sisters living in Ankara.

Our strategy to protect our entire southern border with a security zone that is at least 30 kilometers deep and to strictly monitor the activities beyond this zone remains in place.

The new steps we will take are just a matter of preparation, time and the right conditions.

That is why the saying "we may turn up suddenly one night" should never fall on deaf ears.

The FETO treason network tries to spread the impression that they are still standing strong especially through their militants nestled abroad; this is nothing but whistling past the graveyard.

Let me say this clearly.

FETO can never raise its ugly head again in this country and it is impossible for similar organizations to commit new forms of treason.

Neither our state, nor our nation or the political establishment will allow such a situation.

Those who instill morale in terrorist organizations, which are in their deathbed as a result of our operations, for political gain will pay a heavy price.

We cannot accept any propaganda for those who target the national will, especially under the pretext of art.

It is of vital importance that those of us in positions of responsibility oppose the exploitation of common values such as culture and arts, which glorify human beings, by the enemies of humanity and democracy.

Above all and beyond any political consideration, I believe that we owe this to the heroes who stopped the tanks with their bare hands on the night of July 15.

Distinguished Members of the Grand National Assembly,

Türkiye's power does not stem only from its domestic resources and capabilities.

Our power comes from hundreds of millions of friends with whom we share a common civilization, history and cultural heritage, and who appreciate our human values.

Today, when "Türkiye" is mentioned around the world, including in the Turkic Republics, in Africa, in the Balkans, in Asia, in the Caucasus and in the Gulf, people tear up and their hearts fill with peace and trust.

The existence of hundreds of millions of people who rejoice or grieve with our nation, feel proud of Türkiye's achievements, and come to our aid in our darkest hour, as was the case on February 6, is our unique achievement.

For this reason, we have always attached great importance to foreign policy and will continue to do so.

Of course, there were times when our effort and sacrifice were in vain.

A case in point is relations with the European Union.

We kept every promise we made to the European Union, but they kept almost none of the promises they made to us.

Despite changes of administration, there has been no change in the European Union's unfair and partial attitude towards our country, which is incompatible with the principle of pacta sunt servanda.

They inflicted injustice upon injustice to our country by disregarding the principles, rules and processes they themselves put forward on paper.

Having been kept waiting at the door for 60 years, Türkiye has no expectations from the European Union.

They will correct their own mistake if they reverse their injustices, especially the visa imposition, which they use as a veiled sanction against us.

If they don't, they will completely lose the right to expect anything from us politically, socially, economically and in terms of the military.

If they have any intention of terminating the full membership process, which is now mostly just talk, it is up to them.

If need be, we will call the Copenhagen Criteria the Ankara Criteria and proceed on our path for democracy, justice and freedoms.

All the reforms we have introduced in the last 21 years regarding rights and freedoms, which have been described as silent revolutions, were implemented not because someone else demanded them, but because our nation deserves the best.

I would like to reiterate here that we can no longer tolerate any impositions and new conditions in our full membership process, which we have persistently and patiently brought to this day despite the European Union.

On the other hand, the recent decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, an institution of the Council of Europe, were the last straw.

Members of the terrorist organization and their supporters who are encouraged by this decision should not have false hopes.

The despicable FETO supporters, who are already convicted in the public conscience, will not benefit from this decision.

Türkiye will not step back an inch from its fight against this treasonous gang, and will not allow any concessions or a return to the past.

Once a traitor, always a traitor.

Our nation is too prudent and far-sighted to be bitten twice through the same hole.

The picture before us clearly shows that our interlocutors in Europe do not have the slightest respect regarding the price that Türkiye has paid in its struggle for its independence and future.

Even the founding member of the system, the UK, could not tolerate the European Court of Human Rights which, under the influence of some countries, exceeded its authority and disregarded Türkiye's sovereign rights.

We cannot respect the decisions of institutions aligned with terrorist organizations or listen to what they say.

Moreover, this is not the whole story.

Those who preach lessons in democracy to us are playing three monkeys as Islamophobia continues to cover their being like poison ivy.

Those who almost sanctify Islamophobia, directly or indirectly support such actions, and turn a blind eye to hate crimes against Turks and Muslims are preparing their own end.

As we always say, those who share the same sack with terrorist organizations and with those who harbor hostility towards Islam and Turks under any pretext are doomed to suffer the same fate one day.

There is no country, no society or institution that had something to gain from a hostile policy against Türkiye.

Likewise, all our brothers and sisters from Karabakh to Libya, from Syria to Somalia know very well how valuable and critical Türkiye's friendship is.

In these regions, our country has put its weight in favor of justice, legitimacy and human life and has not allowed oppression and occupation.

Finally, after 30 years of occupation, Karabakh, the territory of Azerbaijan, regained its freedom and, praise be to Allah, justice is done.

We are in a sincere effort to make more friends.

We will be happy to work with anyone who takes our hand of friendship and shares our interests.

There is no problem, no matter how thorny, that cannot be solved if space is created for dialogue and diplomacy.

As a matter of fact, we have successfully taken many important steps in this context recently.

We have made significant progress in our goal of creating a zone of peace around our country.

We tried to deepen our cooperation through regional integration projects.

We are ready to add new ones.

If anyone takes one step towards us, we take two.

We only ask that Türkiye's sovereign rights, its achievements gained at great cost and its red lines are respected and a win-win approach is adopted.

On such a premise, we can talk, negotiate and agree on any issue.

We hope that the other groups and parties in the parliament will also contribute to the unity of understanding that we have established as the People's Alliance with respect to these policies.

What matters is Türkiye, all else is nothing but a minor detail.

We expect all actors who follow the path and priorities of the people and move in the same direction to act in this way.

Distinguished Members of the Grand National Assembly,

It is in our hands to make 2023, the centennial of our Republic, the herald of a new era for our country, nation and democracy.

We can achieve this by talking to each other, engaging in discussion, reaching compromise and ultimately meeting on the common ground of Türkiye.

The most important feature that makes democracy superior to other styles of government is the fact that it makes more room for common denominators in society.

In this respect, strengthening democracy also means strengthening the unity and solidarity of the nation and its will to live together in peace.

I would like to reiterate that we are open to all kinds of criticism and suggestions that will benefit our nation as long as they do not amount to insults, slander and lies.

We will continue to speak our mind, say the truth and pursue the interests of our country in all circumstances.

Of course, we will not remain silent in the face of injustice.

We shall not tarnish the great will of the nation that was entrusted to us at the ballot box.

We will continue to fight against any form of tutelage as we have done in the past.

We will not shy away from anyone and courageously defend the interests of Türkiye and the Turkish Nation in the global arena.

But we will strive to carry out this struggle for our independence and future on the broadest possible ground and with the broadest possible consensus.

We will endeavor to benefit from the experience of all political parties working to serve our country under the roof of the parliament, and of each and every member of our population of 85 million.

I hope that the new legislative year of the Assembly will open the door to a new spirit of cooperation.

May Allah help us.

With these feelings, I once again wish the 2nd Legislative Year of the 28th Term of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye success.

I wish success to the Members of Parliament in the new legislative year.

I thank you all in advance for your support in our struggle to build the Century of Türkiye.

I salute you with my warmest wishes and respect.

All the best...