

OPINION

What's next for Turkey?

By Harun Yahya

The Turkish people voted for a second time on November 1st after failing to form a coalition government following the June elections. As is known, the AK Party, that lost a serious number of votes in the previous elections, had been obliged to form a coalition government for the first time after 13-year single party run. These five months were a time of uncertainty and instability due to Turkey being without an official government. Besides, many terror attacks took place in many parts of the country that resulted in the martyrdom of many of our police officers, soldiers and ordinary civilians. One of the biggest attacks was quite shocking, not only for the Turks, but for the entire world as it occurred in the center of the capital of Turkey. That insidious blast caused fear among people because it was an indication that the terror attacks were not limited to only southeastern Turkey but had reached metropolitan areas. The Turkish people went to the ballot boxes under such circumstances. The ballot boxes were opened and the voters said "yes to stability" according to the local and international communities.

Above all, the results of November elections were considered as astonishing for everyone, even for AK Party supporters. They said they were not expecting the turnout as the AK Party gained nearly 50% of the votes by increasing its share 9% in a matter of five months. Moreover, the polling companies who were known to make accurate estimations had to apologize on TV for their incorrect predictions. Consequently, the results showed that Turkey did not prefer a coalition government but a strong one-party rule to present them with a secure environment free from terrorism.

The opposition parties were also able to pass the 10% threshold and take their seats in the parliament in order to sustain stability, to continue to have plurality and to have a functioning democracy. Yet, the opposition parties were also surprised to see the shift of their votes in favor of the AK Party to a certain extent.

It is essential to note that Turkey is not a country that only thinks of its own benefit but has a good head on its shoulders when comes to its neighbors. It has managed to turn these differences into richness. Therefore, it is important to note the importance of a stable Turkey's existence in the Middle East, where we are witnessing severe conflicts and sufferings everywhere. As Turkey now has a powerful government, it will make it more effective to bring the fighting in the region to end. With the new AK Party government coming to power as a single party, it will be easier for them to reconcile with its strong neighbors, especially Iran. During the AK Party's 13-year rule and the Erdogan administrations, Turkey and Iran had a positive relationship despite some roughness due to some policy differences, which are quite common in diplomatic relations between countries. The AK Party has directly - or indirectly - supported Iran during its rule and there is no reason why the new government won't act the same. President Rouhani sent a message to President Erdogan following the elections praying for the success of the government and further expansion of their relations with Turkey. Also, the head of the Iran-Turkey parliamentary friendship group, Moayed Hosseini Sadr, celebrated the victory and stated that their relations would grow during the new period, giving good news of numerous mutual visits by high-ranking officials from both countries.

Iran and Turkey are powerful enough to bring peace to the region and, therefore, some foreign media circles are trying to drive a wedge between them to prevent their unity. Yet, this is out of consideration as these two wise countries will not fall for such plots which try to weaken the Islamic world; the constant positive mutual messages of the leaders is an important indication that they will not let this happen. Stressing that the two states have no competition in regards to the regional issues, Rouhani has stated that the best way to overcome such conspiracies lies in carrying out serious reciprocal meetings. If these two strong Muslim nations with a deep common culture cannot do their best to bring peace, the war in the region will continue and that will mean the killing of more people everyday. Saving even one human life is what matters the most. As Muslims, we are responsible to undertake all the necessary efforts with all our might. We believe we can make it with Iran by the will of God.

*The writer has authored more than 300 books translated into 73 languages on politics, religion and science. He may be followed at www.harunyahya.com.

Lufthansa cabin crew strike for second day

Cabin crew at Lufthansa staged a second day of walkouts on Saturday, but the German airline was expecting a strike-free day on Sunday.

On the second day of a planned week of protests over failed pension talks, Lufthansa canceled 520 short-haul flights, affecting 50,000 passengers, virtually all of the flights operated by its main Lufthansa brand out of Frankfurt.

Lufthansa spokesman Andreas Bartels told Reuters that long-haul flights were operating as planned.

"The economic damage will certainly go into millions, but we still can't give an estimate and will only know after the strike how much it has cost," Bartels said.

Strikes this year have so far cost Lufthansa €130 million.

Queues were building at Frankfurt airport but a spokeswoman said the situation was far from chaotic. It has been booking hotel rooms for stranded passengers and airport operator Fraport has also made camp beds available.

The cabin crew union UFO announced on Friday it would not stage any walkouts on Sunday so as to spare the leisure travelers who predominantly travel on Sundays.

The head of the UFO union Nicoely Baublies said passengers booked on Lufthansa flights between Monday and Friday should expect not to fly.

"We will however make it known during the course of Sunday from which airports and on which concrete routes it



will be possible to fly," he said.

Lufthansa is struggling to come to agreement with various staff groups on how to compete with low-cost carriers on short-haul flights.

The cabin crew walkout comes after

Lufthansa and the union failed to reach an agreement in a long-running row over early retirement benefits and pensions.

The UFO union plans to strike until next Friday, which would make it the

longest walkout in the airline's 60-year history.

The carrier is also in talks with its pilots on pay and pensions. They have staged over a dozen strikes in 18 months.

Over 90,000 hit by Somalia floods

Over 90,000 people in southern Somalia have been hit by weeks of severe flooding, almost half of them forced from their homes, the United Nations warned.

"More than 90,000 people have been affected since October 23 and an estimated 42,000 people displaced as a result of the flash floods and river flooding," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said, AFP reported.

Hardest hit are the southern Somali regions of Bakool, Bay, Lower Juba, Middle Juba and Middle Shabelle, with flash flooding in late October, the UN report said.

Fighting continues in many of those areas between Somalia's Al-Qaeda linked Shabab terrorists and government and allied forces, backed by an African Union force that counts more than 20,000 members.

The UN said that while rains and river levels have now eased, the risk of more flooding is not over.

"Thousands of people in the low lying areas of the southern and central parts of Somalia remain at risk of flash and river flooding," the UN added.

Somalia is hit by seasonal flooding most years, but weather experts also warn of the risk of floods sparked by the El Nino weather phenomenon.

El Nino comes with a warming in sea surface



AFP

temperatures in the equatorial Pacific, and can cause unusually heavy rains in some parts of the world and drought elsewhere.

The UN last month warned El Nino could drive the number of people needing aid soaring by over 80 percent, from some 12 million people at the start of 2015 to over 22 million people by the start of 2016.

Bombs across Baghdad kill nine people

Bombs in and around Baghdad killed at least nine people on Saturday, police and medical sources said, highlighting security challenges that include terrorist militancy.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility but ISIL terrorists, frequently set off bombs in the capital, Reuters reported.

Five members of the security forces and one civilian were killed in Tarmiya, 25km north

of Baghdad, when a bomber attacked a security checkpoint, the sources said.

A bomb in the northwestern district of Duwanim left two more dead and nine wounded, while a blast in the Nahrawan area, south of the capital, killed one and wounded six, the sources said.

Separately, police said they found the bodies of three men in northern Baghdad who had been shot in the chest and head.



WHO declares end of Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone

The UN health agency said on Saturday Ebola-ravaged Sierra Leone had beaten an 18-month outbreak that killed almost 4,000 of its people and plunged the economy into severe recession.

"Today, November 7, 2015, the World Health Organization declares the end of the Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone," Anders Nordstrom, the UN agency's country representative told a ceremony in the capital Freetown, provoking prolonged cheering from the gathered dignitaries, AFP reported.

The former British colony recorded around half of the cases in an epidemic that has infected 28,600 people across the three hardest-hit West African nations and claimed 11,300 lives since December 2013.

Experts agree that the real death toll is almost certainly significantly higher than the official data, which has been skewed



AFP

by the under-reporting of deaths in many probable Ebola cases.

The announcement represents a hugely

significant milestone in UN-backed efforts to wipe out Ebola, leaving neighboring Guinea as the only country still requiring cases.

ing cases.

With just a handful of cases a week arising in that country in recent months, health campaigners are hopeful the battle with history's worst outbreak is almost won.

Save the Children has sounded the alarm however over the long-term impact on 1.8 million children in Sierra Leone who missed nine months of school, pointing to a "significant spike in adolescent pregnancies".

The crisis took a devastating toll on primary health services and immunization programs, with the deaths of 221 medical staff - five percent of frontline doctors and seven percent of nurses and midwives.

A country is considered free of human-to-human transmission once two 21-day incubation periods have passed since the last known case tested negative for a second time.