

How Erdoganism Is Killing Turkish Democracy

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Because Erdogan's approach delegitimizes all opposition, 40 million of the country's 80 million inhabitants are left on the outside, a recipe for national social upheaval not seen since the late 1970s.

Turkey was undeniably transformed by last July's failed coup. President [Recep Tayyip Erdogan \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2016-10-17/erdogan-s-journey\)](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2016-10-17/erdogan-s-journey), having barely survived an attempt on this life, has become a Turkish Muslim messiah in the eyes of his supporters: he is the unchallenged leader of the nation, charged with reinvigorating the Muslim *umma*, the [global Muslim community \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2017-06-02/how-muslim-world-was-invented\)](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/review-essay/2017-06-02/how-muslim-world-was-invented). Opposition has become blasphemous. Those who refuse to support him are anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim and therefore enemies of the state. This is terrible news for Turkey's democracy, which requires a healthy opposition to survive.

Erdogan, a right-wing leader, first came to power as prime minister in 2003 through his Justice and Development Party (AKP). He became president in 2014. In that time, especially during the last decade, he has delivered economic growth, which has helped him increase the AKP's vote share. More insidiously, he has demonized parts of the electorate unlikely to vote for him, including seculars, liberals, social democrats, leftists, and Kurds. This strategy built Erdogan a large base made up of conservatives and political Islamists...

[Read the full article on the Foreign Affairs website. \(https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2017-07-07/how-erdoganism-killing-turkish-democracy\)](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2017-07-07/how-erdoganism-killing-turkish-democracy) ❖

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