



United States Mission to the OSCE

On June 24 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Turkey

As delivered by Political Counselor Gregory Macris
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
July 5, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Millions of Turkish voters made their voices heard during the presidential and parliamentary elections on June 24. The United States encourages voters and parties on all sides of the political spectrum to work together for Turkey's democratic future and to maintain a meaningful political dialogue. Societies gain strength through respect for diverse points of view, especially on difficult issues. Healthy democracy requires elected governments and robust institutions to be accountable to the law and to the will of the people.

While Turkey invited the OSCE and its Parliamentary Assembly to observe its elections, we are concerned by the government's decision not to accredit dozens of seconded observers from OSCE participating States. We would appreciate clarity from the Turkish delegation as to the reasons for the government's refusal to accredit these observers.

We appreciate the important, highly professional work of the ODIHR International Election Observation Mission, and note the concerns detailed in its preliminary assessment of the conduct of the campaign and vote. These concerns include an uneven playing field during the campaign period leading up to the elections, and observed irregularities on voting day. In particular, we note the mission's observation that "Fundamental rights and freedoms are not fully guaranteed by the Constitution and the legal framework."

The observation mission also commented that "Freedoms of assembly and expression are further restricted in practice, especially by provincial governor decisions under the state of emergency." The United States would like to use this opportunity to reiterate its call on the Turkish government to end the protracted state of emergency, release those detained arbitrarily under emergency authorities, including opposition politicians and civil society actors, and take concrete steps to safeguard the rule of law, consistent with Turkey's own domestic and international obligations and commitments. We look forward to ODIHR's final report, and urge the Turkish Government to continue to work closely with ODIHR.

We respect the decision of the Turkish voters and look forward to a constructive relationship with President Erdogan and the Government of Turkey, confronting common challenges. We urge the Government of Turkey to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all within its borders – regardless of their political persuasion or their vote on June 24 – as guaranteed by the Turkish constitution and in accordance with Turkey's OSCE and other international commitments and obligations. As an ally and friend, the United States continues to support Turkey's democratic development – for which commitment to the rule

of law and a diverse and free media, including the safety of journalists, remain essential. We look forward to continued dialogue on these issues.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.