

December 2013
Newsletter - Issue No. 42

Egypt:

Egypt's Draft Constitution

Egypt's Constitution Referendum: Vote YES for Stability?!

The Weak State

The Felools- "The Old Regime Remnants", "The Traditional Forces", "The Ruling Elite"

2013-2014: Between Despair and Moving On

Lebanon:

Mohammad Chatah' Assassination: The Gloves are Off

Hezbollah vs. Al-Qaeda: The Age of the Muslim Civil War

Turkey:

#AKPgate: The Emperor is Naked

Gülenism vs. Erdoganism

Egypt's Draft Constitution



Zaid Al-Ali

Egypt's Missed Constitutional Moment

"Egypt's new draft constitution includes a number of important improvements. It contains clear language on the issue of discrimination and violence against women; it grants significant rights and affords protection to children and the disabled; the list of socio-economic rights has been lengthened and is more detailed than it has ever been" [...]

"Finally, more secular-minded Egyptians will be comforted that many of the references to religion that had been included in 2012 were eliminated" [...]

"In addition, although the list of socio-economic rights is more detailed than in the past, more basic rights such as speech and association are hardly improved"[.....] "The constitution does not offer any convincing mechanism for the enforcement of rights, meaning that the additional rights provided will almost certainly remain unprotected. Just as worryingly, the new constitution tilts the balance of power firmly back in the president's favor" [.....] "The last two rounds of constitutional reform have shown painfully that none of the groups that have been steering the reform process since February 2011 have a convincing vision of reform"



[Read More](#)



Bassem Sabry

29 things you need to know about Egypt's draft constitution

The military: This is one of the most controversial sections of the draft constitution. The draft retains military trials for civilians, but has maintained it in more specific contexts, including: cases that represent direct assault on military personnel during active duty; military establishments and

ammunition; military zones; military secrets and documents or military factories; and crimes related to obligatory conscription. The law is to specify exactly the nature of these crimes. This has been one of the most controversial and opposed elements of this draft constitution, and the military has remained steadfast in hanging on to it. The military will also have a veto over the choice of defense minister for two presidential terms as per Article 234.

[Read More](#)



Mai El-Sadany

Highlights from Egypt's Draft Constitution (Part 1)

In a new development, the current draft's Preamble touches heavily on Egypt's identity, laying out the country's Islamic and Christian histories and detailing the revolutions of 1919, 1952, and January 25, 2011-June 30, 2013. The Preamble is also colored with lofty rhetoric that describes the aspirations of the Assembly members for a future Egypt, discussing among other things, the role of Sharia, the importance of human rights, and the necessity for equality. The reference to Sharia is thought to have been included to assuage some members' fears on secularism, but no doubt, plays a curious role in the draft's introductory text" [.....] "Ultimately, the identity of Egypt as a state has served as a source of contention in constitutional discussions as it implicitly denotes (or can be understood to denote) a sense of allegiance to broader regional and religious entities. In addition to geographic allegiances, the description of the state has also been controversial, raising questions on separation of church and state and whether Egypt should be a secular nation"

[Read More](#)

Highlights from Egypt's Draft Constitution (Part 2)

"While older constitutional texts also enshrined the principles of equal protection and the equality of all citizens irrespective of factors like "religion, creed, sex, origin, race, color, language, disability, social status, political affiliation, or geographical identity" as Article 53 in this draft of the Constitution does as well, the reality is that minorities continue to be marginalized in practice. Despite the lofty rhetoric of such articles, children continue to be prosecuted in the judicial system and disabled Egyptians continue to be marginalized in society; implementing legislation and coordinated efforts by non-governmental organizations will be key in ensuring that these constitutional articles are not violated"

[Read More](#)



Seifeldin Fawzy

What Egypt's constitution must achieve

*"As an Egyptian, it is difficult not to feel cheated. The opportunity of the ages has been presented before us. Unlike the 2012 transitional period, a serious technocratic government is in place, and a constitution will be submitted to popular referendum before any elections take place whatsoever. **The roadmap is putting Egypt on the path to democracy. It is just a shame that those implementing the roadmap are refusing to accept that a true democracy must guarantee essential, non-violable freedoms, and that the surest safeguard for a democratic future is ensuring a separation of church and state, difficult as that may be**"*

[Read More](#)



Ziad A. Akl

The Truth about the Constitution

*"The truth is, the new constitution has been passed long ago. The referendum is merely a procedural necessity, but its outcome is not even prone to doubt. The dimensions of the new regime have already been envisioned, the institutions that shall retain power have already been selected and the individuals that will constitute the "elite" have already been chosen. However, what the West does not seem to understand so far is that the conflict is no longer a military-brotherhood one, neither is it a question of democracy and equality, it is really a strictly local Egyptian political battle between the traditional forces that have always been there; and its outcome is a matter of resources rather than one of actual change. **The referendum is really just a petty challenge that the current regime will be able to comfortably win**"*

[Read More](#)



Jahd Khalil

Constitutional Woes

*Most coverage of Egypt's constitutional redrafting has centered on the issues making their way into the amendments that the body will eventually draft, rather than process itself. The document's quality will eventually reflect how strong the process of writing it was, and so far indicators are not promising, observers say" [.....] **"Egypt's constitutional redrafting is rushed and taking place without sufficient expertise or buy-in past the***

Egyptian elite, and at times it doesn't even gain the full attention of those making amendments that in principle should be built to last"

[.....] "Another critique of the current drafting is its fixation on countering the 2012 constitution, which is perceived as a largely Islamist document. With the ouster of Morsi in July, a process of active undoing of his one-year rule unfolded, with reversing its effects on the constitution as the most significant undertaking on the legal front"

[Read More](#)

Egypt's Constitution Referendum: Vote YES for Stability?!

Sendmonkey

Beyond Definitions

"Both campaigns fail to provide specifics as to why one should vote for or against the new constitution, not because there has not yet been a finalised draft yet, but because it is, almost in every way, no different than the MB constitution that the YES voters aim to replace and the NO voters aim to keep.

We are watching the set-up for an epic political battle of zero consequence, other than that of meeting a milestone in our post 30 June roadmap for "stability". How this will lead to stability, no one knows either. Just one thing seems certain: the experiment continues"

[Read More](#)

Rana Allam

Will you vote this year?

This will be the third year in a row that Egyptians will vote on a constitution. Yet another referendum with yet another Yes campaign. Vote Yes for stability, they said in 2011. Vote Yes for Islam, they said in 2012. Vote Yes for your country, they are saying in 2013. Never are there campaigns to "Read", only to vote Yes... be it through TV shows or the huge posters and ad campaigns all over the streets of the country" [...] ***"The YES to Egypt campaign might do the trick with many Egyptians, given the hardships they see every day, and they want this phase to end and for the Islamists to disappear. However, a larger segment would probably say, "Forget it, I am not leaving my couch"... and this will not be a political statement, either!"***

[Read More](#)





The Weak State

Sendmonkey

The Weak State

*"For all of the talk for the need of a welfare state in Egypt, we currently run one of the biggest welfare programmes in the region, one that provides continuous monthly income and benefits to 6m mentally unfit Egyptians who don't do their jobs and we like to call this programme the "Egyptian State." [.....] **"So please, dear Egyptian citizen, support the imprisonment of every famous revolutionary and demand that the state sentences them heavily, and then wait a week before the following thought starts creeping into your head: Why am I not feeling any safer? When you are there, take a close look at the strong state you believe now exists, and you may just have your answer"***

[Read More](#)



H.A. Hellyer

Egypt has to learn the lesson

"It's that this situation remains unstable, and unsustainable – and if the state wishes to avoid yet more unrest and instability, it would be well advised to focus its efforts on tackling these core issues that continue to plague Egypt. The longer the state avoids addressing these issues, the more inevitable it becomes that there will be very few choices left. The most enduring choice, frankly, would be to build a more enduring political settlement that will be established in the form of a second Egyptian republic – a republic based on respect of the Egyptian citizen. Not the holder of an Egyptian ID – but the Egyptian citizen. There is a difference. But if the state chooses to learn the hard way, then so be it – **it's getting almost boring reminding it that this kind of course simply isn't sustainable. The question is – what price will Egyptians pay? But pay it, they are sure to"**

[Read More](#)



Wael Eskandar

A False Sense of Security: The Egyptian Military's Lost Bet on the Police

"At the end of the day, the military may soon realize that they have no possible path for stability and consensus except through reforming the police, which they, not the activists, will need to do. With such an obvious conclusion, the question remains whether the military itself is free enough of corruption to take such measures, and whether its own network of interests and false sense of security will burn the political class it is trying to build"

[Read More](#)



Nader Bakkar

The Egyptian Dilemma: Between the Crushed Winners or the Felool

"We have to stand by the state as a concept that goes beyond the people within it. We must be wary of the dangers of the collapse of the state's institutions. This doesn't mean giving up on political solutions and negotiations in a country that's exhausted by conflicts that may kill its aspirations. We, in the Nour Party, which belongs to the Islamist current, have had to make some challenging, but flexible, choices. We are focused on passing through this transitional period, to reach the stage of parliamentary and presidential elections, whatever they may bring. Our strategic goal now is to preserve the presence of a political scene, even if it's not very bright and regardless of our representation in it. Otherwise, the country will either descend into chaos, or be gripped by a totalitarian regime. Either choice will destroy Egypt"

[Read More](#)



The Fellols - “Old Regime Remnants”, “The Traditional Forces”, “The Ruling Elite”



Sendmonkey

Egypt's Others

*The felool's main weakness is the overstatement of their power. For all of the money and the numbers they may wield, they also have no organised structure, policies or leadership of their own. They have unified their decision and mobilisation out of necessity in the past three years to ensure their survival, and now that they have “won”, the inevitable inner struggles for power amongst them are starting to show. **They are set to discover that just like the Islamists and the revolutionaries; they are little more than a social segment of society that will start fracturing politically the moment the elections are upon us. For all of their “victories”, their real battle is about to begin***

[Read More](#)

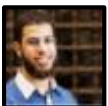


The Big Pharaoh

Is The Mubarak Regime Returning Back To Egypt?

"The answer is no. The Mubarak regime is not returning back because the Mubarak regime has never left Egypt in the first place, even after Mubarak was toppled.** The regime that ruled Egypt for more than 30 years is much more than a person. It is a system of government and this system is still intact even though the head was chopped off 3 years ago" [...]* ***"The Mubarak regime is here and has always been here since Mubarak was toppled. It will continue to be here till the revolution rules this country, something that I don't think will happen anytime soon"

[Read More](#)



Nader Bakkar

The Egyptian Dilemma: Between the Crushed Winners or the Felool

***"One of the main issues that has had a negative impact on Egypt, both culturally and socially, is the settling of scores with either ‘the crushed winner,’ embodied by the Brotherhood, or ‘the felool,’ embodied by remnants of the Mubarak regime.** This persistence threatens Egypt's future and chips away at January 25's aspirations of political pluralism. The cycles of revenge have evolved, and Egyptians have*

become, albeit subconsciously, focused on ensuring the complete exclusion of the 'other.' This mentality of allowing only one opinion, and stating that all are either "with or against" is once again taking over and it appears it will continue to do so for a long time"[.....] **"Our strategic goal now is to preserve the presence of a political scene, even if it's not very bright and regardless of our representation in it. Otherwise, the country will either descend into chaos, or be gripped by a totalitarian regime. Either choice will destroy Egypt"**

[Read More](#)

2013- 2014: Between Despair and Moving On

Wael Eskandar

Traitors and the exercise in futility

"Perhaps the rejection of the regime's old oppressive ways can be seen as treason. Maybe that's why people are supportive of the treason rhetoric pushed by the regime's intelligence agencies. This too may change by time. However, until it does, there will be no room for those who want to challenge the current accepted norms of repression and injustice. **There will be no room for these types of traitors who want to challenge the status quo, not until Egyptians themselves turn into traitors of this sort, traitors to injustice"**

[Read More](#)

Mohamed A. Fouad

Amr, Esraa and the Travolta Predicament

"We must ensure that the public domain remains open. The society is bound to self regulate at some point of time. The public has to learn to discern the truth from the plethora of information that they are being faced with. They must distinguish between attempts to inform and attempts to manipulate. Thomas Jefferson once wrote that: **"The force of public opinion cannot be resisted when permitted freely to be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary to keep the waters pure"**

[Read More](#)



Salamamoussa

The Years Of Hope And Despair

*"The fading year of 2013 has been one of despair in Egypt. Every week brought fresh horrors and searing images of pain. Who can forget the Port Said deaths, the lynching of Shi'a citizens, the attack on St Mark's Cathedral, the horror of death at Rab'a, and the daily demonstrations often accompanied by injuries and deaths. **The polarized country is left feeling that it must choose between one of two tormentors. That would be a false feeling. There is luminosity in Egypt, which only a third way will uncover, and chart a path forward unchained by the forces that gave the land forty years of despair**"*

[Read More](#)



H.A. Hellyer

In Egypt, Supporters of the 2011 Revolution Need to Move On

"As the "maverick middle" in Egyptian society, the revolution has not had critical mass since February 2011. Almost three years on, revolutionaries have to recognise their failings and refocus their activities. They should focus on civil society and grassroots change" [...] "It seems that those who considered themselves revolutionaries on January 25, 2011, will be the only ones willing to do that thankless job. **The revolution remains relevant, but Egypt has paid a high price for the failure of its supporters.** There may be a day when these people can stimulate the creation of a cohesive political alternative, but that day is not here"

[Read More](#)



Mohammad Chatah' Assassination: The Gloves are Off

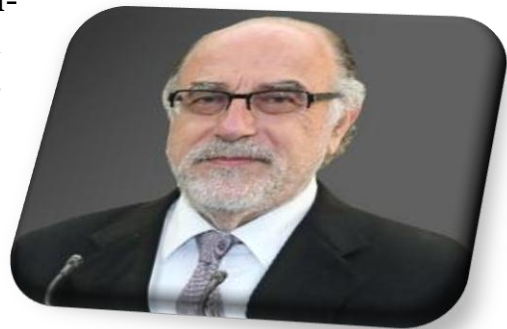
Rami G. Khouri

The meaning of the Shatah assassination

"The attack should probably be analyzed at three levels simultaneously: the domestic confrontation between the March 14 and March 8 coalitions; the armed conflict to bring down or save the Syrian regime; and the wider ideological conflict across the Middle East that is driven to a large extent by Iran and Saudi Arabia" [...]

"Accusations quickly materialized about who would have wanted to do this, from Syria and Hezbollah allies, to Saudi Arabia, to Salafist-takfiris, along with some voices wondering whether some other party did this to stoke sectarian tensions by making this appear like Syrian-Iranian- Hezbollah retaliation. Local reports also quoted March 14 sources as saying that Shatah's assassination could have been due to the approaching Jan. 16 start date of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon trial of five persons associated with Hezbollah who are accused of being involved in the 2005 assassination of the late Prime Minister Rafik Hariri" [...]

"The symbolism of the bombing location means that the gloves are off, and any part of the country is now a fair target for the many killers out there"



[Read More](#)



Mustapha Hamoui

The Death of Two Mohammeds

"There are many ways in which yesterday's incident can be analyzed, explained and contextualized. Politics, power struggles and regional wars can certainly account for the big picture. But I worry that we are becoming a bit too desensitized, that we are quickly forgetting about individuals like Mohammad Chaar and Mohammad Chatah whose lives, in all their eventfulness, richness and splendor, get trampled over so casually by this monstrous insanity"

[Read More](#)



Jocelyne El Boustany

More of the Same?

"While Syria and Iran's blackmail and support for terror were meant to further their national interest; in the strategic partnership between Iran and Hezbollah, the latter as a junior partner has always furthered Tehran's interests. In fact, with a brilliant combination of deceit and guile, Hezbollah consolidated the Ayatollah's power at the expense of Lebanon's stability for over three decades through hostage taking and hijackings to suicide bombings. Of course, Hezbollah's leaders always denied any knowledge of the group behind these terrorist acts"



[Read More](#)



Octavia Nasr

We Are All Going To Die

*"A targeted assassination took the life of another Lebanese thinker along with companions and bystanders, exposing once more the evil of those playing God, thinking they win with every voice they mute and every life they cut short."[....] "You can continue to rise on the dark pile of skeletons you've accumulated, you'll never be nourished, as we are, by the message of those positive souls every time we think of them or remember them. **We are all going to die, there is no bravery in death, there is however bravery in living up to one's principles and uniting people rather than dividing them, in loving people rather than hating them, in talking to people rather than killing them because you can't handle opposition or non-loyalty!"***

[Read More](#)



Michael Karam

Mohammad Chattah was a class act in a ‘country full of crooks’

*"The blast only served to shunt Lebanon further down the road to oblivion. Not only do we need a government but we also need one stuffed to the gills with the likes of Chattah. **Say what you want about Lebanon's political class and its universal breathtaking incompetence, but the one difference between the March 14 and the March 8 blocs, the two entities that, since the eponymous month in 2005, have defined Lebanon's two main political impulses – essentially pro and anti Syrian – is that the former at least understood that a country needs a functional economy**"*

[Read More](#)



Elias Muhanna

Mohamad Chatah (1951-2013)

"The next several days will be full of speculation about who wanted Mohamad Chatah dead. There will be a great deal of tail-chasing commentary about motives and mysteries, “which side benefited most from the assassination” and which side was weakened by it. Was his death a message to President Sleiman and March 14 to drop their campaign for a neutral cabinet? Was it a message from Syria to the international community that it still has the ability to create havoc in Lebanon, in the build-up to the Geneva conference? (The most laughable theory is already in circulation in the press, insinuating that his death was related to something he tweeted about Hizbullah on the morning of his assassination"

[Read More](#)



Sami Nader

Chatah's assassination marks rise of extremism

"It may seem cynical, but the bitter reality is that the prevailing forces are in two camps: either secular repressive forces; or jihadists, takfiris and mumanaa [anti-Western defiance] types. And neither camp is shying away from using terrorism and accusing the other camp of treason. Ironically, although the two battling

camps are absolutely hostile to each other, they both are in a de facto existential alliance because they justify each others' existences. This duality is based on extremism and the logic of eliminating the other. **There is no room for a third party like Chatah, who is a voice of reform, democracy, political participation, reason and moderation. Now is not his time. Now is the time for madness and relentless sectarian war.** The road of reform and progress has given way to a race to hell. One of Chatah's last tweets was: "NEEDED: an alliance of all who oppose political Islamism (both Shiite & Sunni versions) but equally reject secular despotism as an alternative."

[Read More](#)



Moulahazat

Thoughts On Today's Blast: How A Car Bomb Can Be A Bloody Message

"What I want to speak of here is the Future, what happens next: What change of strategy will M14 adopt now that it is under direct, apparent threat. Will M14 see a casus belli and ask Tammam Salam form a unilateral government? Will Jumblatt agree to this? What will be the decision of the witnesses of the STL Hariri trial? How will Hezbollah respond? What would be the impact on the governmental negotiations? on the presidential elections? on the electoral law? on the parliament's extended term? **The political statements are now marked by confusion. Hariri already accused Hezbollah of the blast. My guess is that M8 will accuse Israel. Sectarianism, Syria and conspiracies are all over the news.** It will take few days to get clearer. New stances might emerge, and after all, this is the perfect moment for anyone to change sides. **The same way Wissam Al-Hassan's assassination paved the way for the events of early 2013, this is what will define the rules of the game in 2014"**

[Read More](#)



Hezbollah vs. Al-Qaeda: The Age of the Muslim Civil War

Michael Young

Hezbollah is caught in an Al-Qaeda vise

"The only problem is that Hezbollah now finds itself transformed into cannon fodder in a battle against Al-Qaeda, when its initial goal was merely to defend Assad rule. Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah has claimed that his party's aim is to fight the "takfiris." However, far more effective forces than

his have failed to triumph over Al-Qaeda. The only success came when the United States collaborated with the Sunni Awakening movement in Iraq to push the jihadists onto the defensive. **Hezbollah doesn't have that capacity. The party has imported the Syrian war to Lebanon, even if it is not the only one to do so. Its hubris has been a curse to the country, and will remain so for some time"**

[Read More](#)



Elias Muhanna

A Levantine Dystopia

"As the year draws to a close, Lebanon exists in a state of low-intensity civil war. The Army has begun to fracture along sectarian lines" [...] **"Hizbullah fears it is over-committed in Syria** so Iran sends IRGC special-ops groups to man command stations in case of an Israeli attack, which looks increasingly likely."**[...] "The refugee crisis grows worse by the day. The borders are un-policeable. The economy is in free fall. The struggle grows more "existential" despite the reality that, as in Syria, there is less and less to fight over with each passing day. This is the worst-case scenario"**

[Read More](#)

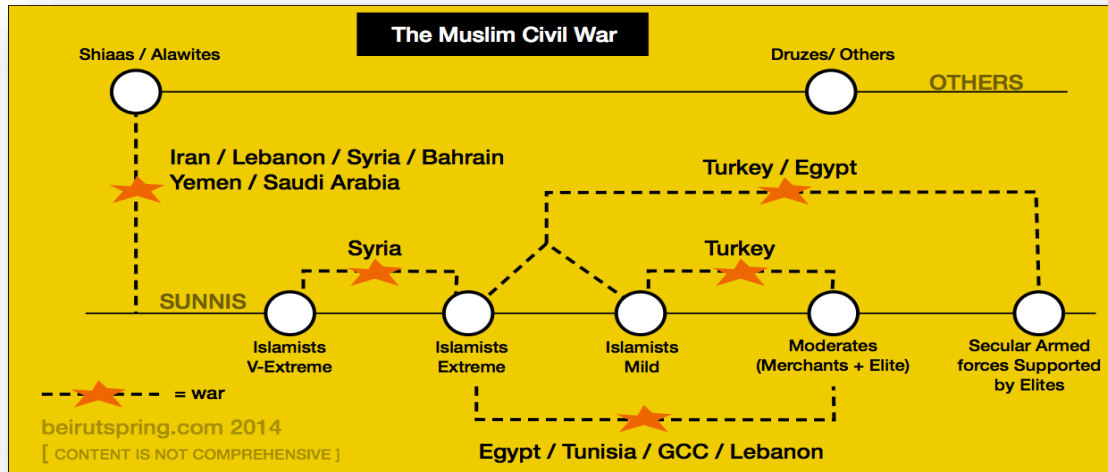


Hanin Ghaddar

Will Lebanon surrender?

"Syria and Lebanon should not be given to Iran only because al-Qaeda is getting stronger. Iran and Hezbollah are not the right weapon against ISIS or al-Nusra. On the contrary, Hezbollah will only make them stronger. This point is not in our hands as Lebanese, but it is not less significant"**[.....]** **"Hezbollah and Iran will not stop. They will not stop running the battle in Syria and they will not stop killing Syrians and Lebanese in order to achieve their ultimate goal: control both Syria and Lebanon. Lebanon cannot fight this monster alone. We need all help in the world before the rest of us join Mohammad Chatah. May he rest in peace"**

[Read More](#)



Mustapha Hamoui

The Age of the Muslim Civil War

"The chart I put together (above), while not comprehensive, attempts to show the geographical breadth of the Muslim-Muslim conflict in all parts of the MENA region. **The reason why these conflicts started doesn't matter (take your pick: Arab Spring removing oppressors and giving a space for conflicts to rise, Zionist Meddling, Western Imperialism, whatever suits your fancy). But what is indisputable is that we have entered the age of the Muslim Civil war**"

[Read More](#)

Turkey

#AKPgate: The Emperor is Naked



Abdullah Bozkurt

Corruption scandal will consolidate Turkish democracy

"The opposition will continue to pound the AKP on the largest corruption case in Turkish history in the lead-up to elections. This will not only weaken the AKP but will knock it out of the game, for sure. The only defense the AKP can mount is to amputate the diseased limbs

from the party so that the main body can be saved. That seems very unlikely, however, given that the AKP is a leader-dominated party and not institutionalized with strong democratic traditions of succession and compromise. **Erdoğan will fight to the end with lots of foot soldiers behind him as deciding delegates. Then, the likely scenario is that the AKP will split under heavy public pressure and opposition criticism. Erdoğan's blistering speeches and demonization of others will only precipitate his fall"**

[Read More](#)



Emre Kizilkaya

Winter Is Coming For The AKP

"It will be extremely hard for the AKP government to weather this perfect storm. Erdogan is surely facing an existential threat. As extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, many people now expects that he will design a brutal counter-attack. Yes, **he can seriously damage the Gulen movement, but it will be increasingly harder for him to keep his party united. For AKP, it seems that winter is coming, just before three crucial elections"**

[Read More](#)



Mahir Zeynalov

How Erdogan is covering up the corruption scandal

"The saga has started when police, following a 14-month secret investigation, raided more than two dozen addresses in Istanbul and the capital Ankara, detaining at least 52 people. In later raids, 30 more suspects were detained in connection to corruption allegations linked to bribery in public tenders. At least 24 suspects, including the sons of two ministers and Iranian businessman Reza Zerrab, were put behind bars while most of the other suspects were released pending trial" [.....] "Erdogan is constantly portraying the probe as a "dirty foreign plot" in the hope of politicizing the investigation. It is deeply disappointing to see that a government that was voted for due to its promise to fight corruption is now trying to cover up bribery it was allegedly involved in. The investigation is also taking a heavy toll on the Turkish economy and the fate of the Turkish economy will determine the fate of the current government"

[Read More](#)



Firdevs Robinson

In Turkey, nothing will be the same again

*"There is no doubt that the Prime Minister Erdogan and his government took a serious blow to their reputation from this latest scandal. It will not be possible to get away with it just by blaming dark forces and those wanting to stop Turkey's rise to a global power anymore. Mr. Erdogan, the shrewd politician he is, may still have something in his sleeve that may give him the upper hand against his Islamist foes. **The opposition may or may not pull itself together, rise to the occasion and become a credible alternative in the years to come. Turkey has turbulent days ahead, with many uncertainties. One thing is for sure, after this week's developments, whatever the immediate outcome nothing will be the same ever again**"*

[Read More](#)



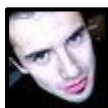
Ceylan Ozbudak

Turkey's corruption cases cast shadow on elections

*"Just as how Thatcher restored the economy and gave ordinary people a stake in the British economy, Erdoğan's AK Party has also restored the exhausted Turkish economy and created thousands of small businesses, while opening up Turkish industries to emerging markets in the region and the world. And just as how Thatcher shifted the entire British political scene to center right, Erdoğan stabilized the center-right agenda for the Turkish public. Therefore, **it's not too difficult to see that the Turkish center-right will likely do well in the upcoming elections, largely owing to the conservative ideology set up by the civil society organizations and the absence of a charismatic and dynamic figure or any sort of 'functioning' ideology on the disunited center left. Over time this can change but for the time being, the political situation in regard to center right governance looks to be largely maintenance of the status-quo**"*

[Read More](#)

Gülenism vs. Erdoganism



Emre Kizilkaya

Erdoganists, Gulenists and The Gezi Youth

"Erdogan should be concerned of what might the Gulenists can reveal next, as well as the challenge that the characteristics of his new foe presents. After all, the Gezi Park protests were a leaderless, decentralized, mostly secular grassroots movement, while the Gulenists have a strictly hierarchical structure with a strong leader on top, preaching Islam. In this sense, Gulenism has always been a natural competitor to Erdoganism on ideological level, hence the mutual distrust that has always been between both sides" [...] "I'm not sure if Erdoganism or Gulenism will triumph, but I'm optimistic about the future of Turkish democracy"

[Read More](#)



Amberin Zaman

Turkish journalists caught in cross fire of AKP-Gulen conflict

"The media has never been free in Turkey" [...] "Pressure on journalists has escalated since the mass anti-government protests in June. Scores were beaten and some sexually harassed by police. And at least 72 others lost their jobs over their perceived sympathy for the protesters. As one of my former editors put it, "A phone call from the prime minister's office and you're history." Self-censorship is the sole means of survival for many of my colleagues" [...] "The



corruption probe is set to make our lives even harder. It's widely seen as part of the power struggle between Erdogan and Turkey's most influential Sunni Muslim cleric, Fethullah Gulen. A long-running accusation leveled against Gulen's followers is that they have penetrated the bureaucracy, the judiciary and the police force and used their positions to amass evidence against their enemies. Until recently, their main targets were alleged coup plotters in the army, and Gulen and Erdogan

collaborated against them. But **now there is an open war between the two leaders, and journalists are caught in the middle**"

[Read More](#)



Taha Özhan

Post-Kemalist Turkey and the Gülen Movement

"The Gülen group is a very successful organization that has not been immune to the problems experienced during Turkey's normalization process. On the contrary, it has been one of those organizations that felt these growing pains more intensely" [...] "What would be expected from a network that extends from export to private secondary schools, from domestic and foreign lobbies to unions, from the media to the syndicate, from universities to global education networks is to actually have thought, more meticulously than most, about "where it would fit" and "what it would mean" for a new Turkey" [...]"

"The Gülen Movement was known for the cool-headed decisions it took at the risk of severe criticism during Turkey's most difficult times. Today, it would be expected that the same movement will display a similar rationality in a changing Turkey"

[Read More](#)



Husain Haqqani

Turkey's Struggle for Checks and Balances

"Erdogan's authoritarian style and the fact that he has been in power too long were bound to create a backlash at some point. That is now happening. The idea of seeing the emerging crisis in Turkey as a power struggle between two titans is glamorous. But the issue in Turkey seems to be checks and balances against government transgressions, not just a personal tiff between Erdogan and Gulen"

[Read More](#)