



March 2014

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Foreign Policy

US, EU officials react to Turkey's YouTube ban

Officials from the United States and the European Union have reacted to the Turkish government's move to block access to YouTube, hours after leaked recordings of a key security meeting were published on the video sharing website.

Marie Harf, U.S. State Department deputy spokesperson, has answered a question on the issue during the press briefing March 27. Harf repeated that Washington is against any violation of free speech and calls Ankara to unblock access to YouTube, as well as Twitter.

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Hurriyet Daily News, 27 March 2014, US, EU officials react to Turkey's YouTube ban

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-eu-officials-react-to-turkeys-youtube-ban.aspx?pageID=238&nID=64214&NewsCatID=359>

#### US compares Turkey Twitter ban to 'book burning', White House Deeply Concerned

Turkey doubled down on its decision to block Twitter at the weekend, amid near-unanimous international criticism of the ban, which the US has compared to book burning. Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs Doug Frantz wrote in an official State Department blog, "Every day, governments around the world devote precious resources to Internet censorship. It is 21st Century book burning."

The White House said on Friday it was "deeply concerned" about a ban on Twitter in Turkey, calling it contrary to democratic governance.



"The United States is deeply concerned that the Turkish government has blocked its citizens access to basic communication tools," White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters.

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Financial Times, 22 March 2014, US compares Turkey Twitter ban to 'book burning'

<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/6e101d96-b209-11e3-b52b-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2wtlFDipW>

Turkey Downs Warplane From Syria After Warning

Turkish fighter jets shot down a Syrian warplane on Sunday after it violated Turkish airspace, Turkey's prime minister said, part of the longstanding hostilities between the two nations over the conflict in Syria.

"If you violate my airspace, our slap will be a hard one," Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said during a televised campaign speech in northwestern Turkey. Mr. Erdogan praised the Turkish military for its response.

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New York Times, 23 March 2014, Turkey Downs Warplane From Syria After Warning

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/24/world/europe/syria.html?action=click&module=Search&region=searchResults%231&version=&url=http%3A%2F%2Fquery.nytimes.com%2Fsearch%2Fsite%2Fsearch%2F%3Faction%3Dclick%26region%3DMasthead%26pgtype%3DHomepage%26module%3DSearchSubmit%26contentCollection%3DHomepage%26t%3Dqry596%23%2Fturkey%2Fsince1851%2Fallresults%2F2%2Fallauthors%2Fnewest%2F>

### **Turkey stands with EU and NATO on Crimea: Davutoğlu**

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu has said his government supports the European Union and NATO's policies regarding Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula after it declared its independence from Ukraine following a referendum.

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Hurriyet Daily News, 19 March 2014, Turkey stands with EU and NATO on Crimea: Davutoğlu

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-stands-with-eu-and-nato-on-crimea-davutoglu.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63790&NewsCatID=338>

EP slams Turkey over rights, graft probe in report



The European Parliament (EP) approved on Wednesday a report criticizing Turkey for setbacks in freedom of speech, separation of powers and the rule of law as well as the government's response to a massive corruption investigation implicating Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and members of his inner circle.

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Today's Zaman, 12 March 2014, EP slams Turkey over rights, graft probe in report

<http://www.todayszaman.com//news-341919-ep-slams-turkey-over-rights-graft-probe-in-report.html#.UyCkTvKX9mY.facebook>

### **Turkish PM's account of Obama's Gülen response 'not accurate,' White House says**

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's remarks regarding a phone conversation with President Barack Obama last month are "not accurate," a senior White House official told daily Hürriyet in a written statement on March 7.

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Hurriyet Daily News, 8 March 2014, Turkish PM's account of Obama's Gülen response 'not accurate,' White House says

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pms-account-of-obamas-gulen-response-not-accurate-white-house-says-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63341&NewsCatID=359>

Turkey scrambles jets after Russian plane again flies near coast

The Turkish Air Force scrambled six F-16 fighter jets after a Russian surveillance plane flew parallel along its Black Sea coast, the military said on Friday, amid increased tensions between Russia and the West over Ukraine.

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Reuters, 7 March 2014, Turkey scrambles jets after Russian plane again flies near coast

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/07/us-turkey-russia-idUSBREA2612F20140307>

### **Turkey's Erdogan tells Putin crisis must be solved by Ukrainians**

Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan told Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday that it was largely up to Ukrainians to resolve their country's crisis, and said instability in the Black Sea nation would have regional repercussions.

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Reuters, 4 March 2014, Turkey's Erdogan tells Putin crisis must be solved by Ukrainians

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/04/us-ukraine-crisis-russia-turkey-idUSBREA231XY20140304>

State Department Report Details Suppression of Human Rights Abroad

The State Department reported Thursday that an increasing number of governments were suppressing political opponents and restricting the freedom of assembly.

Turkey, a NATO member and important American partner in the Syrian crisis and on other issues, was cited in the report for a number of abuses, including against the news media.

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New York Times, 27 February 2014, State Department Report Details Suppression of Human Rights Abroad

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/28/world/state-department-report-details-suppression-of-human-rights-abroad.html>

### **Domestic Politics**

#### **Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan Gains Ground in Turkish Elections**

Turkey's prime minister appeared to have scored a decisive victory in local elections seen as a referendum on his rule over an increasingly divided country, setting the stage for a possible run for president.

Exit polls showed Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's ruling Justice and Development Party, or AKP, winning a comfortable plurality of votes nationally, but the margin of victory and his party's control of major cities was unclear early Monday. Two polls showed the party registering 46% of the vote with 80% of the ballots counted, with the main opposition Republican People's Party, or CHP, securing 28%.

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Wall Street Journal, 31 March 2014, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan Gains Ground in Turkish Elections

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303978304579470752756039522?KEYWORDS=turkey&mg=reno64-wsj>

Erdogan targets enemies after poll triumph



Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan looked a step closer to a presidential bid and to gaining the upper hand in a bitter power struggle on Monday, casting strong local election results as a mandate to hunt down enemies within the state "in their lair."

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Reuters, 31 March 2014, Erdogan targets enemies after poll triumph

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/31/us-turkey-election-idUSBREA2R12X20140331>

### **Turkey Muzzles YouTube, Media Ahead of Elections**

The Turkish government blocked YouTube and restricted local media, drawing international outrage days ahead of critical local elections seen as a referendum on Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's rule.

The move on Thursday, which comes a week after Mr. Erdogan's government shut access to Twitter, was condemned by policy makers in Washington and Brussels. The ban, which blocked Turkish media from broadcasting the content of an audio leak, consolidated Turkey's place in a small club of nations with draconian Internet censorship rules, including China, Syria and North Korea.

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Wall Street Journal, 27 March 2014, Turkey Muzzles YouTube, Media Ahead of Elections

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304418404579465283912697784?KEYWORDS=turkey&mg=reno64-wsj>

Turkish Web Watchdog Blocks Twitter

Turkey's Internet watchdog blocked Twitter Inc. on Thursday, hours after Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to shut down the social-media site that has become a vehicle for allegations of government corruption ahead of elections.

The move, confirmed by the telecommunications regulator and the state news agency, sent shock waves across Turkey, which is one of the top 10 users of Twitter world-wide with millions of users.

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Wall Street Journal, 20 March 2014, Turkish Web Watchdog Blocks Twitter

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304026304579451950514196232>



### **Turkish business world slams gov't for Twitter ban**

The Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) has said the ban on Twitter, which is disproportionate and against freedoms, reveals ungrounded fears and does not serve democracy.

“Unfortunately, our country has not been able to get rid of the banning instinct with regard to access to information via the Internet, protection of freedom of expression and communication and adopting legal infrastructures for developing technology,” the association said in a written statement on Friday.

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Today's Zaman, 21 March 2014, Turkish business world slams gov't for Twitter ban

<http://www.todayszaman.com/news-342758-turkish-business-world-slams-govt-for-twitter-ban.html>

In Turkey, Twitter Roars After Effort to Block It

Embattled Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan seemed on Friday to have failed in an attempt to block Twitter Inc. in Turkey, as countless Turks—including his longtime ally, President Abdullah Gul — bypassed the ban to criticize the government, just nine days before local elections.

Twitter use in Turkey spiked despite the telecommunications regulator's steps late Thursday to block access to the microblogging site, with users tapping private servers outside the country to circumvent the blackout.

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New York Times, 21 March 2014, In Turkey, Twitter Roars After Effort to Block It

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/world/europe/turks-seek-to-challenge-twitter-ban.html?action=click&module=Search&region=searchResults%231&version=&url=http%3A%2F%2Fquery.nytimes.com%2Fsearch%2Fsite%2Fsearch%2F%3Faction%3Dclick%26region%3DMasthead%26pgtype%3DHomepage%26module%3DSearchSubmit%26contentCollection%3DHomepage%26t%3Dqry596%23%2Fturkey%2Fsince1851%2Fallresults%2F2%2Fallauthors%2Fnewest%2F&r=0>

Wall Street Journal, 21 March 2014, Turkey's Effort to Block Twitter Falts

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303802104579452912778991676?KEYWORDS=turkey&mg=reno64-wsj>

### **Turkey's Move to Silence Twitter**



The Turkish government's assault on free speech reached a self-defeating low this week with its order to silence Twitter — an authoritarian move that quickly backfired in the tech-savvy world of social media.

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New York Times, 21 March 2014, Turkey's Move to Silence Twitter

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/opinion/turkeys-move-to-silence-twitter.html?action=click&module=Search®ion=searchResults%231&version=&url=http%3A%2F%2Fquery.nytimes.com%2Fsearch%2Fsite%2Fsearch%2F%3Faction%3Dclick%26region%3DMasthead%26pgtype%3DHomepage%26module%3DSearchSubmit%26contentCollection%3DHomepage%26t%3Dqry596%23%2Fturkey%2Fsince1851%2Fallresults%2F2%2Fallauthors%2Fnewest%2F>

Brookings Institution releases report “Turkey Goes to the Ballot Box: 2014 Municipal Elections and Beyond”

With municipal elections taking place on March 30, Turkey is entering into an eight-month long election cycle at a time when the country is undergoing considerable domestic turmoil, writes Ali Çarkoğlu of the Brookings Institution.

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Brookings Institution, 13 March 2014, Turkey Goes to the Ballot Box: 2014 Municipal Elections and Beyond

<http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/03/13-turkey-ballot-box-municipal-elections-carkoglu>

### **Bipartisan Policy Center release report “Turkey’s Local Elections: Actors, Factors, and Implications”**

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is becoming a liability to his supporters at home, and the US-Turkish alliance faces the risk of being completely eroded as Turkey grows more authoritarian and Islamist under Erdoğan, a US bipartisan think tank has concluded in a report.

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Bipartisan Policy Center, 14 March 2014, Turkey’s Local Elections: Actors, Factors, and Implications

<http://bipartisanpolicy.org/library/report/turkey%E2%80%99s-local-elections-actors-factors-and-implications>

Across Turkey, New Unrest as Teenage Boy Is Buried



An enormous outpouring of grief and antigovernment rage during the funeral procession for a teenage boy felled by a police tear-gas canister turned into another mass confrontation with the Turkish authorities on Wednesday as mourners clashed with antiriot squads in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. At least one person was killed.

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New York Times, 13 March 2014, Across Turkey, New Unrest as Teenage Boy Is Buried

[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/13/world/europe/funeral-of-turkish-boy-leads-to-more-violent-clashes.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/13/world/europe/funeral-of-turkish-boy-leads-to-more-violent-clashes.html?_r=0)

### **Turkish coup trial convicts freed amid political turmoil**

Turkey ordered the release of 19 men convicted of plotting a coup, days after an ex-military chief was freed in a case now entwined in a power struggle between Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and a U.S.-based Muslim cleric.

The 19 people, including prominent journalists, lawyers, retired military officers, a convicted gang leader and the killer of a top court judge, were among hundreds convicted in the "Ergenekon" case, which lay at the heart of Erdogan's drive to break the political power of Turkey's military.

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Reuters, 10 March 2014, Turkish coup trial convicts freed amid political turmoil

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/10/us-turkey-ergenekon-idUSBREA291GB20140310>

Reuters, 7 March 2014, Turkey's former army chief freed from prison

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/07/us-turkey-general-idUSBREA261MM20140307>

Top business group chair voices concern over Turkey's EU accession

Ankara's EU accession process, which started in 2005, is currently at a highly "unsuccessful" juncture with regards to both Turkey and the European Union, Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) head Muharrem Yılmaz has said at a ceremony in Istanbul.

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Hurriyet Daily News, 7 March 2014, Top business group chair voices concern over Turkey's EU accession

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/top-business-group-chair-voices-concern-over-turkeys-eu-accession.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63310&NewsCatID=344>



### **Turkey's Koc calls on Erdogan to address graft charges to lower tensions**

Mustafa Koc, chairman of Turkey's biggest company Koc Holding, on Sunday called on the government to calm financial markets worried about a corruption inquiry and denied he has sought to undermine Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan.

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Reuters, 2 March 2014, Turkey's Koc calls on Erdogan to address graft charges to lower tensions

<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSBREA210DR20140302?irpc=932>

Economy & Energy

Government Victory in Turkey Offers Respite From Turmoil

The Turkish government's decisive victory in local elections provided a brief respite to months of political and economic turbulence, triggering a market rally Monday despite opposition allegations of ballot-rigging and warnings of a coming crackdown by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan against his detractors.

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Wall Street Journal, 31 March 2014, Government Victory in Turkey Offers Respite From Turmoil

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303978304579473190997035788?KEYWORDS=turkey&mg=reno64-wsj>

#### **Political unrest stirs volatility of Turkish economy: Moody's**

In a report published on March 24, the international ratings agency Moody's said the Turkish economy had been left fragile by the political tumult shaking the country and the uncertainty in the financial markets.

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HUrriyet Daily News, 25 March 2014, Political unrest stirs volatility of Turkish economy: Moody's

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/political-unrest-stirs-volatility-of-turkish-economy-moodys.aspx?pageID=238&nID=64064&NewsCatID=344>

Fragility and Turkey



As the Fed prepares to meet for the first time under new chair Janet Yellen, how will emerging economies fare? Developing countries such as Turkey have held emergency meetings and raised key interest rates to retain and attract money as the US central bank continues to cut back its cash injections.

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BBC, 17 March 2014, Fragility and Turkey

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-26610958>

### **Electricity consumption in Turkey soars 78 pct over decade**

Turkey has seen its electricity consumption rise by 78 percent over the past 10 years, recently announced data has shown, confirming the country's desperate search for new energy sources is paramount to reduce its staggering energy bill.

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Hurriyet Daily News, 17 March 2014, Electricity consumption in Turkey soars 78 pct over decade

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/electricity-consumption-in-turkey-soars-78-pct-over-decade.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63699&NewsCatID=348>

Why The Worst Is Still Ahead For Turkey's Bubble Economy

The explosive rise of Turkey's economy in the past decade is one of the most fascinating growth stories of all time. Since 2002, Turkey's economy nearly quadrupled in size on the back of an epic boom in consumption and construction that led to the building of countless malls, skyscrapers, and ambitious infrastructure projects. Like many emerging economies in the past decade, Turkey's economy continued to grow virtually unabated through the Global Financial Crisis, while most Western economies stagnated.

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Forbes, 5 March 2014, Why The Worst Is Still Ahead For Turkey's Bubble Economy

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jessecolombo/2014/03/05/why-the-worst-is-still-ahead-for-turkeys-bubble-economy/>

### **Turkey's joblessness soars above gov't target in 2013**

The unemployment rate in Turkey rose by 0.5 points to 9.7 percent in 2013, as the expansion of labor force outstripped the rise in employment, official data has shown.



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Hurriyet Daily News, 7 March 2014, Turkey's joblessness soars above gov't target in 2013

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-joblessness-soars-above-govt-target-in-2013.aspx?pageID=238&nID=63289&NewsCatID=347>

Foreign companies in Turkey face squeeze

Foreign companies in Turkey are beginning to feel the effects of a sagging currency, rising inflation and a growing political power struggle, adding to fears the country may not be the source of future growth that some companies had hoped.

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Reuters, 25 February 2014, Foreign companies in Turkey face squeeze

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/02/25/turkey-investment-idUKL6N0LU37420140225>

### **Credit Card Debt Threatens Turkey's Economy**

The credit ratings agency Standard & Poor's warned in a report last week that the boom in consumer credit had become a serious risk for Turkish lenders. Slowing economic growth, political turmoil and increasing reluctance by foreign investors to provide financing "are prompting a deterioration in the operating environment for Turkish banks," S.&P. said.

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New York Times, 27 February 2014, Credit Card Debt Threatens Turkey's Economy

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/28/business/international/credit-card-debt-threatens-turkeys-economy.html?ref=turkey>