

Erhürman wins landslide victory to become new Turkish Cypriot leader (Online Article)

Historical Note

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Content

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The rule of the post-Denktaş era, which calls for a change in the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community every five years, was confirmed again today.

In an election that was described as a referendum on the future of the community, Turkish Cypriots elected the president of the Republican Turkish Party (ÇTP), Tufan Erhürman, as their leader.

Mr. Erhürman won the election with 62.8% of the vote, enjoying strong support from progressive parties, movements, and trade unions, while the outgoing Turkish Cypriot leader, who was supported by right-wing parties, was relegated to second place with 35.8%. This is the largest electoral victory in the post-Denktaş era.

Mr. Erhürman thus becomes the seventh leader of the Turkish Cypriot community since the events of 1963. Until 1973, Dr. Fazıl Küçük remained vice president of the Republic of Cyprus and was considered the de facto leader of the Turkish Cypriot community. Rauf Denktaş then took over the leadership of the Turkish Cypriot community until 2005, when the then leader of the ÇTP, Mehmet Ali Talat (2005-2010), won the elections following the Annan Plan. Since then, no Turkish Cypriot leader has managed to win a second term. They were followed by Derviş Eroğlu (2010-2015), Mustafa Akıncı (2015-2020), and Ersin Tatar (2020-2025).

Erhürman's election is obviously a positive development, especially for the future of the Turkish Cypriot community, as Tatar and the right-wing government (UBP, YDP, DP) have worked tirelessly to alter the secular character of Turkish Cypriots, the latest example being the regulations allowing the hijab in secondary schools in the north.

Tatar's defeat may also lead to early general elections, given the challenge to the UBP leadership. It is reminded that the north has a parliamentary democracy, while the Turkish Cypriot leader only manages the Cyprus problem.

However, it is too early to discuss any prospect of resuming talks on a federal solution to the Cyprus problem, given the policies of the governments led by Nikos Christodoulides in Cyprus and Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey. It will take a huge effort, and above all pressure from the grassroots, for any positive developments to emerge in the Cyprus problem.

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