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THE OPPOSITION AGAINST TURKEY IN THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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The election of the president for the75th session of the United Nations (UN), which will begin in September 2020, took placed under the precautions for COVID-19. Unlike previous years, this years elections were organized via a virtual platform by Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, the President of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly; and Volkan Bozkır, a candidate from Turkey, who is a former Minister and former chief negotiator, was elected for presidency.[1]

According to the customs, the president of the UN General Assembly is elected amongst 5 geographical regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Western Europe and Other States) in compliance with the principle of equitable geographical representation and in accordance with the practice of rotation.[2] Candidates may take office without a need for election in the case that there were no other candidates or there was a consensus between the states in the regions. However, the elections for the 75th session held last week took place differently than the mentioned customs.

The Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus, Armenia and Greece, countries of the region where Turkey is situated, raised an objection to Volkan Bozkırs candidacy.[3] The reason for the objection was explained as the divergence between the policy pursued by Turkey and the UN norms and values.[4] As a result of the objection from these three countries, despite being the only candidate, voting was held for Bozkır at the General Assembly, for the first time. At the end of the voting, Bozkır was elected with the support of 178 out of the 193 countries.[5] Although this election is important due to a name from Turkey achieving a high-level position of representation at the UN for the first time, it is also pointing to another important case for Turkey.

It is once again seen that Greece and Armenia, which have been supporting each other on the genocide claims, meet at common ground regarding opposition against Turkey on the occasion of the elections, similar to many other issues. As it can be remembered, the Foreign Ministers of Greece, Armenia and the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus held a summit in 2019. In that summit, a decision for trilateral cooperation was made between the Ministers and Armenia declared its support to the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus for the Eastern Mediterranean issue, even though it has no relation with this issue.[6]

In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia declared on April that it will join the EUs decisions to impose sanctions on Turkey, despite the fact that it is not an EU member or even a candidate.[7]

In the light of this attitude of Armenia, Greece and the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus regarding the UN General Assembly elections, it is easily seen that the reason of the problem is not about Turkeys divergence with the UN norms. Apparently it must have been understood that the reason why Greece, Armenia and the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus made this attempt is their opposition against Turkey, as the attempt of these three countries failed in the elections held in the UN General Assembly. The high number of votes in favor of Bozkır also shows that this idea is not very common in the UN. Although the Armenian press is interpreting the anti-Turkey propaganda understanding to be strengthening Armenias international position,[8] the situation is actually progressing in the opposite way. This attitude of Greece and Armenia, which is not justified, causes the image and reliability of these two countries to be damaged in the international sphere. In an international platform like the UN, trying to prevent the use of a right acquired in accordance with the rotation procedure with a hostility-based approach is contrary to the UN's structure that strives to protect international peace. Therefore, it is seen that Greece and Armenia are acting in contradiction with UN values.

[1] Election Of The 75th Presıdent Of The General Assembly, *United Nations Official Website*, https://www.un.org/pga/74/election-of-the-75th-president-of-the-general-assembly/.

[2] Volkan Bozkir of Turkey elected president of UN General Assembly, *Xinhua News Agency*, 20 June 2020, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-06/18/c_139148208.htm.

[3] Ermenistan BM 75. Genel Kurul Başkanlığı Türk adayı için oylama yapılmasını talep etti, *Ermeni Haber Ajansı*, 4 June 2020, https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2020/06/04/Ermenistan-BM-75-Genel-Kurul-Başkanlığı-Türk-adayı/185022.

[4] Türkolog: Ermenistan, Yunanistan ve Kıbrısın, BMde Türkiye temsilcisinin seçilmesine engel olmaları bu ülkeler arasındaki işbirliğinin güzel bir örneği, *Public Radio of Armenia,* 16 June 2020, https://tr.armradio.am/2020/06/16/turkolog-ermenistan-yunanistan-ve-kibrisin-bmde-turkiye-temsilcisinin-secilmesine-engel-olmalari-bu-ulkeler-arasindaki-isbirliğinin-guzel-bir-orneği/.

[5] Volkan Bozkır BM Genel Kurul Başkanı seçildi, *DW*, 18 June 2020, https://www.dw.com/tr/volkan-bozkır-bm-genel-kurul-başkanı-seçildi/a-53853010.

[6] Güney Kıbrıs - Ermenistan - Yunanistan üçlü görüşmesi gerçekleştirildi, *Kıbrıs Postası*, 18 November 2020, https://www.kibrispostasi.com/c58-GUNEY_KIBRIS/n287254-guney-kibris-ermenistan-yunanistan-uclu-gorusmesi-gerceklestiril.

[7] Armenia Joins EU Sanctions on Turkey Over Cyprus Drilling, *Massis Post*, 01 April 2020, https://massispost.com/2020/04/armenia-joins-eu-sanctions-on-turkey-over-cyprus-drilling/ .

[8] Türkolog: Ermenistan, Yunanistan ve Kıbrısın, BMde Türkiye temsilcisinin seçilmesine engel olmaları bu ülkeler arasındaki işbirliğinin güzel bir örneği, *Public Radio of Armenia,* 16 June 2020, https://tr.armradio.am/2020/06/16/turkolog-ermenistan-yunanistan-ve-kibrisin-bmde-turkiye-temsilcisinin-secilmesine-engel-olmalari-bu-ulkeler-arasindaki-isbirliğinin-guzel-bir-orneği/.

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