

# **MEI MEDIA WATCH**

**(A Survey of Editorials)**

**No. 43**

**Friday, 4 October 2013**

## **The Turkish Protests, May 2013**

**Note:** What began as a peaceful dissent by environmentalists on 28 May 2013 who objected to a development project in Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park snowballed into large scale protests against Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Justice and the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The high-handed nature of the police in evicting the protesters and Erdogan's uncompromising attitude inflamed public opinion and brought out people from myriad spectrum of Turkish society to the streets, affecting many major cities. Their anger was soon directed at the authoritarian functioning of Erdogan and the AKP, perceived erosion of Turkish secular space and domestic and foreign policy failures. Editorials from international and Middle Eastern media on the protest are reproduced here. **Editor MEI@ND**

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**gulfnews.com**

**Dubai, Editorial, 2 June 2013, Sunday**

### **1. Riots Mark Growing Frustration in Turkey**

**T**hree days of rioting in Istanbul and Ankara have caught Turkey's government off-guard, with police arresting close to a thousand people on public disorder charges. The riots mark a growing frustration with the 10-year reign of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and his Islamist-rooted Justice and Development Party, the AKP. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/riots-mark-growing-frustration-in-turkey-1.1191805>

# The Peninsula

Local focus, Global vision

Doha, Editorial, 2 June 2013, Sunday

## 2. Trouble in Turkey

It will be hyperbole to call it Turkish Spring, as some sections of the Western media have done, but there is no doubt that the current wave of protests in Istanbul poses a serious challenge to the credibility and popularity of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. What began as an outcry against a local development project has snowballed into widespread anger against what some say is the government's increasingly conservative and authoritarian agenda. **For the full text:** <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/editorial/239628-trouble-in-turkey.html>

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London, Editorial, 2 June 2013, Sunday

## 3. Turkey's Protests Need a Light Touch

It is possible to make both too much and too little of the violent protests in Turkey that started with demonstrations against cutting down 600 trees in Taksim Square in the centre of Istanbul. On the plus side, there is no meaningful parallel here with the protests in Tunis and Cairo at the beginning of the Arab Spring. Turkey has a democratically elected government which has been notably successful in ending the cycle of military coups and creating economic prosperity. **For the full text:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/editorial-turkeys-protests-need-a-light-touch-8641207.html>

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# The New York Times

New York, Editorial, 2 June 2013, Sunday

## 4. Protests in Turkey

Three days of violent protests in Istanbul and other cities in Turkey over the weekend are posing the most serious challenge yet to the decade-long rule of the prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Instead of addressing the legitimate concerns that propelled tens of thousands of people to take to the streets, Mr. Erdogan's inclination is to respond to grievances with disproportionate force. **For the full text:** [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/03/opinion/protests-in-turkey.html?ref=editorials&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/03/opinion/protests-in-turkey.html?ref=editorials&_r=0)

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# TheNational

Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 3 June 2013, Monday

## 5. Turkish Protests Require a Light Touch from AKP

From seemingly inconsequential beginnings, a protest against the building of a shopping centre in a park in Istanbul has exploded into a major crisis for the Turkish government. Thousands of Turks took to the streets of the nation's cities, facing teargas and police batons, and hundreds more gathered in cities around the world in solidarity. **For the full text:** <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/turkish-protests-require-a-light-touch-from-akp>

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# THE JERUSALEM POST

Israel's best-selling English daily and most-read English website

Jerusalem, Editorial, 3 June 2013, Monday

## 6. Trouble in Turkey

Much as the zeal to compare entices, it would be wrong to liken the disturbances in Turkey to those of the misnamed Arab Spring. Foremost, they don't spring from the same source. Although the Islamist government headed by Recep Tayyip Erdogan is nowhere near as tyrannical as Iran's ayatollahs, the protesters in Istanbul have more in common with those who took to the streets of Tehran in 2009, than they do with the masses who toppled Arab despots in recent years. **For the full text:** <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Editorials/Trouble-in-Turkey-315328>

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# theguardian

London, Editorial, 3 June 2013, Monday

## 7. Turkey: A Protest worth Heeding

There are many ways of reacting to the scenes on Istanbul's streets, if you happen to be the prime minister of Turkey. You can send in the riot police, and fill those streets with tear gas. You can denounce Twitter, and hope that no one observes that your aides tweet too. You can blame the opposition. Or you can ask yourself questions: what makes a localized and relatively peaceful campaign to save an inner city park balloon, in just a few days, into a national protest that has spread to half of Turkey's provinces ? **For the full text:** <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/03/turkey-protest-worth-heeding-editorial>

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# hindustantimes.com

New Delhi, Editorial, 4 June 2013, Tuesday

### 8. It's Not Spring in Turkey

**T**urkey's heated summer is a political weather formation markedly different from the Arab Spring to which it is mistakenly being compared. The protests in Istanbul and some of the larger cities along the western coast represent the greatest political challenge for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan but will not lead to the overthrow of the Turkish polity.

**For the full text:** <http://www.hindustantimes.com/viewssectionpage/editorials/It-s-not-spring-in-Turkey/Article1-1070938.aspx>

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## Saudi Gazette

Jeddah, Editorial, 4 June 2013, Tuesday

### 9. Erdogan's Wobble

**T**he large demonstrations that have gripped Istanbul and the mirror protests elsewhere in Turkey have caught everyone by surprise, including perhaps even the demonstrators themselves. Claims that there were a million protesters in Istanbul's Taksim Square and the neighbouring streets and park were clearly wide of the mark. However, there can be no doubt that there has been a significant explosion of popular anger which has been directed against the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. **For the full text:**

<http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20130604168496>

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Jakarta, Editorial, 4 June 2013, Tuesday

### 10. Test of Turkish Democracy

**T**he wave of anti-government protests in Istanbul and more than 60 other cities and towns in Turkey last week will likely continue in the absence of any resolution over the weekend. How Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan resolves this challenge will test the resiliency of Turkish democracy. All eyes are on Turkey, in the same way that they looked at and scrutinized countries emerging from the Arab Spring in 2011. **For the full text:**

<http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/06/04/editorial-test-turkish-democracy.html>

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Beijing, Editorial, 5 June 2013, Wednesday

### 11. Turkish Riots Reveal a Weak Democracy

Riots in Turkey are spreading, after labour unions yesterday (4 June, Tuesday) called for strikes. This would change the makeup of the protesters, which are mainly comprised of members of the middle class and young people. Three people have reportedly died in these conflicts as of June 3, sparking condemnation from Western governments blaming Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan for widespread violence. **For the full text:**

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/786793.shtml#UhsY49LX8qM>

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## TheNational

Abu Dhabi, Editorial, 5 June 2013, Wednesday

### 12. Erdogan Must Show Maturity over Protests

The most important thing to remember about this week's protests in Turkey is this: they are not the latest round in the Arab Spring. Taksim Square, where Turks have been gathering to air their dissatisfaction with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his government, is not Egypt's Tahrir Square. **For the full text:**

<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/erdogan-must-show-maturity-over-protests>

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Karachi, Editorial, 5 June 2013, Wednesday

### 13. Turkish Unrest Excessive Use of Force by Police

With a left-leaning trade union representing a quarter million workers joining the protest movement, it is difficult to agree with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that the stir in his country is dying down. Even though he went ahead with his Morocco visit to show confidence in his administration's ability to ride out the storm, his government is paying the price for the excessive use of force by the police. **For the full text:**

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1027794/turkish-unrest-excessive-use-of-force-by-police>

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## THE DAILY STAR

LEBANON

Beirut, Editorial, 5 June 2013, Wednesday

### 14. Definitive Challenge

The ongoing demonstrations across Turkey have revealed a gaping disconnect between the aspirations of Erdogan's government and those of the people, but if he is clever, the prime minister can take this opportunity to listen to what his citizens actually want, and need. Either that, or he risks alienating his government from Western friends, and jeopardizing the future of the country, vis-à-vis its relationship with Europe. **For the full text:** <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Editorial/2013/Jun-05/219429-definitive-challenge.ashx#axzz2b5qs8Swo>

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THE EXPRESS  
**TRIBUNE**  
WITH THE *International Herald Tribune*

Karachi, Editorial, 6 June 2013, Thursday

**15. Trouble in Turkey**

Turkey has, for some days now, been caught up in a wave of violence as protesters take to the streets to make their feelings known against the policies of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The rallies and meetings, often organized by young people over the social media, have spread across the country, with another demonstration staged by trade union workers on June 5 (Wednesday) in Istanbul. **For the full text:** <http://tribune.com.pk/story/559760/trouble-in-turkey/>

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 *The Indian* **EXPRESS**

New Delhi, Editorial, 7 June 2013, Friday

**16. Not Just a Park**

The redevelopment of Gezi Park in Turkey's largest city has become the unlikely provocation for years of unease and distrust of the ruling Justice and Development Party (the AKP) and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to spill over. Thousands have gathered at Istanbul's Taksim Square and in cities across Turkey to register discontent with the direction of Turkish politics in recent years. The brutal crackdown and tone-deaf response by Erdogan, who blamed Twitter, and his party, with an AKP parliamentarian deeming the young protesters "in need of gas", have brought into focus the very authoritarian turn the protests are directed against. **For the full text:** <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/not-just-a-park/1126065/>

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# The Japan Times

Tokyo, Editorial, 7 June 2013, Friday

### 17. Turkey Boils Over

It started with a small protest over the decision to pave over a small park in Istanbul. But that decision and the Ankara government's heavy-handed reaction has sparked the most violent riots that Turkey has experienced in decades. Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, for years applauded as a moderate Muslim and pragmatist who has overseen his country's economic resurgence, is now widely seen as having lost touch with the masses of Turkish people and is feared to have embraced an intolerant and authoritarian agenda. **For the full text:** <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/06/07/editorials/turkey-boils-over/#.UiEakJJTAXA>

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## **gulfnews.com**

Dubai, Editorial, 7 June 2013, Friday

### 18. Turkey Protests No Arab Spring

The continuing violence and protests in Turkey should not be interpreted as some kind of equivalent of the popular Arab protests that triggered the revolutions of the Arab Spring of 2011. Those were popular uprisings against long established dictatorships, which were backed by military establishments, and had long run out of any popular mandate that they might have had to start with. Turkey has been through a very different experience. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/turkey-protests-no-arab-spring-1.1193997>

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## **The Peninsula** Local focus, Global vision

Doha, Editorial, 8 June 2013, Saturday

### 19. Turkish Turmoil

The protests in Turkey are showing no signs of petering out. Demonstrations and sit-ins of such magnitude running over several days should normally force the authorities in democratic countries to take sincere steps for a solution. But the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is showing a combativeness and indifference that is dangerous. Coming back from a foreign trip, the prime minister made a fiery speech in Istanbul, telling thousands of his supporters who came to greet him that the protests must end immediately. **For the full text:** <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/editorial/240445-turkish-turmoil.html>

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## **Saudi Gazette**

Jeddah, Editorial, 9 June 2013, Sunday



## 20. Turkey Unsettled

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's demand for an immediate halt to the demonstrations across many Turkish cities is not being met. If anything, his vow to press ahead with plans for an Istanbul park which triggered the worst political unrest of his decade in power will probably only increase the tension. **For the full text:** <http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentid=20130609169047>

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**theguardian**

London, Editorial, 11 June 2013, Tuesday

## 21. Turkey: Summer of the Patriarch

There is a bitter irony to events in Turkey. The man who told the Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak before his fall that "no government can survive against the will of its people" dismissed his own civil movement as looters, riffraff and foreign agents. The man who sent the army back to its barracks, and pushed back the power of Turkey's deep state, sent in riot police yesterday to arrest more than 50 lawyers protesting at police brutality. **For the full text:** <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/11/editorial-turkey-summer-patriarch>

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The  
**INDEPENDENT**

London, Editorial, 11 June 2013, Tuesday

## 22. Erdogan Plays it Rough – and Wrong

Whatever points, if any, the protests in Turkey share with the Arab Spring, there is one that cannot now be contested: the intemperate response of a political leader who has found his power unexpectedly called into question. It is understandable that the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, saw the continued occupation of Istanbul's Gezi Park and the city's transport hub, Taksim Square, as an infuriating and very visible challenge to his authority. **For the full text:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/editorial-erdogan-plays-it-rough--and-wrong-8653902.html>

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**Khaleej Times**

Dubai, Editorial, 12 June 2013, Wednesday

## 23. Turkey's Intensifying Crisis



**T**urkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan had warned that his government was running out of patience for the protests at Taksim Square. And it seems like his words were not a mere hollow warning for the hundreds of anti-government protesters who have been calling for his resignation for two weeks. **For the full text:** [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=editorial&xfile=data/editorial/2013/june/editorial\\_june26.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=editorial&xfile=data/editorial/2013/june/editorial_june26.xml)

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## THE TIMES OF INDIA

New Delhi, Editorial, 12 June 2013, Wednesday

### **24. Taksim Isn't Tahrir: But Turkish PM Needs to Rein in His Autocratic Tendencies**

**A** severe crackdown on demonstrators protesting the redevelopment of a park in central Istanbul has evoked images of Egypt's Tahrir Square. However, unlike the symbol of the Arab Spring movement against autocratic regimes in North Africa and the Persian Gulf, Istanbul's Taksim Square is located in the heart of a thriving democracy. **For the full text:** <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/opinion/edit-page/Taksim-isnt-Tahrir-But-Turkish-PM-needs-to-rein-in-his-autocratic-tendencies/articleshow/20544799.cms>

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## gulfnews.com

Dubai, Editorial, 12 June 2013, Wednesday

### **25. Turkey's Democracy Needs Shoring Up**

**T**he daily battles in Istanbul between Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's security forces and a disparate crowd of genuine protesters and committed anarchists are being poorly handled. Erdogan has been in power for more than a decade with few political or institutional checks on his authority. **For the full text:** <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/editorials/turkey-s-democracy-needs-shoring-up-1.1196223>

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## arab news

Jeddah, Editorial, 14 June 2013, Friday

### **26. An Uncharacteristic Error**

**T**urkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has until now enjoyed the sort of career that most politicians in democracies can only dream of. This former mayor of Istanbul who founded his Justice and Development Party (AKP) while in jail in 2001 for his

avowedly Islamist political stance, has gone on to lead his party to three successive election victories, each time securing a greater popular mandate, which has allowed him to govern without the need of coalition partners. **For the full text:** <http://www.arabnews.com/news/454979>

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## Khaleej Times

Dubai, Editorial, 17 June 2013, Monday

### 27. Turkey's Troubles

**T**urkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan appears to be firm in the face of a vociferous opposition. But the truth is that the leader, who has been credited for turning Turkey into an economic powerhouse, is as taken aback by the protests at Taksim Square as the rest of the world. **For the full text:** [http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=editorial&xfile=data/editorial/2013/june/editorial\\_june35.xml](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=editorial&xfile=data/editorial/2013/june/editorial_june35.xml)

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## The New York Times

New York, Editorial, 19 June 2013, Wednesday

### 28. Turkey in Turmoil

**P**rime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan had many opportunities over the last three weeks to resolve the political crisis in Turkey peacefully and quickly. However, with almost every statement and directive he has made the situation worse, increasing concerns at home and abroad over his authoritarian tendencies and Turkey's future as a democratic model in the Muslim world. **For the full text:** <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/20/opinion/turkey-in-turmoil.html?ref=editorials>

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## The Japan Times

Tokyo, Editorial, 21 June 2013, Friday

### 29. Trying Time for Turkish Democracy

**T**he unrest in Turkey continues, touched off by a May 31 clash between police forces and protesters opposed to the Turkish government's plan to redevelop Gezi Park in Istanbul. At the root of the unrest is the resistance by people who fear the government is retreating from the principle of secularism. They criticize Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan for trying to introduce Islamic-tinged policies in a highhanded manner. **For the full text:**

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/06/21/editorials/trying-time-for-turkish-democracy/#.UiEZdZJTAXA>

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London, Editorial, 22 July 2013, Monday

### **30. Another Blow for Turkey's Not-So-Free Press**

**E**vidence that reporters trying to cover last month's protests in Turkey were being targeted by police was troubling enough. That 22 journalists have since lost their jobs in connection with the riots, and another 37 have been forced to resign, is no more encouraging. **For the full text:** <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/another-blow-for-turkeys-notsofree-press-8726455.html>

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Doha, Editorial, 22 June 2013, Saturday

### **31. Making Amends**

**T**he turmoil in Turkey has been contained to a large extent, but Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has suffered a blow to his reputation. He could have handled the protests with more diplomacy and patience. At a time when the world is watching through a microscope every detail of the protest, caution will be more rewarding than haste. There is still time to make amends because the protests haven't died out completely. **For the full text:** <http://thepeninsulaqatar.com/editorial/242295-making-amends.html>

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London, Editorial, 4 August 2013, Sunday

### **32. Turkey's Lack of Democracy is Storing up Problems**

**I**t is proving a long, turbulent summer for Turkish democracy. The chaos of Gezi Park may have abated after judges conveniently stopped building work there; but the fundamental reasons for protest haven't gone away – just as tourists, alarmed by demonstrations spreading far beyond Istanbul, haven't come back. **For the full text:** <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/aug/04/turkey-democracy-free-press-journalism>

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## **Compiled by J R Philemon Chiru**

**J R Philemon Chiru is a Doctoral candidate at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Email: philejnu111@gmail.com**

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