

<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article7241>



Turkey

# Erdogan's violent equilibrium

- IV Online magazine - 2021 - IV558 - July 2021 -

Publication date: Sunday 25 July 2021

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**Her name was Deniz Poyraz. This 27-year-old Kurdish activist was killed at the Izmir offices of the HDP (People's Democratic Party, pro-Kurdish, left) on 18 June 2021 by a far right activist. The killer, Onur Gencer, managed to enter the building, which has a permanent police checkpoint in front of it, without being intercepted.**

It was later learned that a meeting of around 40 people scheduled to take place at the time of the killing was cancelled at the last minute. The assassin, whose photos show him in fatigues with an automatic rifle in northern Syria - where he allegedly worked as a health worker - and who had scouted the building several times, no doubt intended to carry out a massacre with most likely two accomplices, who managed to escape. It also appears that Poyraz was tortured before being killed.

## Double standards

The benevolent attitude of the police officers who arrested the murderer in the act, and his remand in custody pending trial in 24 hours, without attempting to deepen the investigation into his probable political and other links, were severely criticized by some of the public. The contrast was drawn with the repression of students, women and in particular LGBTI + people, whose various events organized on the occasion of Pride were very violently repressed by the police.

Although President Erdogan waited two days before condemning the killing, the real shock was the Constitutional Court's acceptance of the indictment banning the HDP, three days after the attack for "terrorist activities". The indictment also calls for 450 party leaders and activists to be ruled ineligible.

## International reclassification attempts

While the godfather on the run, Sedat Peker, has revealed the level of complicity of the state apparatus with organized crime through his YouTube videos and tweets - from international drug trafficking to money laundering - Erdogan, weakened internally, above all because of an economic crisis which has deepened for three years, is trying to reposition itself at the international level alongside the Western clan, after a period of multilateral tensions.

Ankara's day-to-day foreign policy based on a disproportionate pride (like that of its leader) aimed to pursue an "independent" course by negotiating separately with rival powers. This prospect has indeed allowed to a certain extent a consolidation at the internal level, with the aim of slowing down the process of disintegration in the Islamo-nationalist base of the AKP. However, Ankara has seen its "independent" room for manoeuvre shrink, especially after Trump's defeat and Biden's coming to power, accompanied by growing tensions with Moscow (on issues such as Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh and Ukraine, despite significant military and energy cooperation) and Europe (especially with Macron).

## Western benevolence

## Erdogan's violent equilibrium

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Erdogan thus planned to take advantage of the NATO summit and that of the European Union to convince Western states of his new turn, while trying to maintain in the eyes of his electoral base his posture of a strong man who does not bend. Thus, his meeting with Biden was presented as an opportunity to demand accountability for Washington's recognition of the Armenian genocide. Erdogan came away with a commitment to outsource the security of Kabul airport after the US withdrawal, without even addressing the topic of genocide.

While Turkey was not at the centre of discussions at the European summit, it would seem that the Western clan, who need Ankara on their side given its geopolitical position, in particular with regard to the migrants, will not force Erdogan too much on the democratic question as long as he makes a pledge of allegiance and shows himself to be "cooperative". This does not surprise the left forces in Turkey, who are well aware that the fall of the dictator will be the work of the exploited and oppressed themselves.

*1 July 2021*

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