

# The Kurdistan Region and likely split of AKP

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The former Turkish prominent and technocrat minister and one of the co-founders of the justice and development party (AKP) Ali Babacan is working to establish the new political party in Turkey. The discussion about dissatisfied group inside AKP is happening for longtime, which since early 2000s until present AKP has been in charge of power in Turkey. Whether Babacan will start a new party or not the internal party problems is one of most important issues of Turkey's internal politics which can have impact on the Turkish foreign policy and on the Erbil-Ankara relations as well.

### **The likely split of AKP**

At this stage not only Ali Babacan but former Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu also is thinking of starting a new political party. The critical voices inside AKP have grown more after Erdogan efforts to change the political system of Turkey and collect all the authorities in executive presidency. The dissidents believes that AKP has crossed those principals was formed for and gradually the personal and family rule are dominating over the party.

In the meantime Turkey slowly has given up on the reforms that related to its proposal to join the European Union. And stepped back from democracy and instead of that has promoted the policy to focus on the security and stability which led to empower the nationalist -Islamic faction inside AKP. Also limited the freedom of expression and stepped back in resolving the Kurdish cause. At the foreign policy level tensions with Europe and US have increased and Turkey has become closer to Russia and other regional powers.

Along these changes there are no doubt that Turkish economy is not booming as before which was one of the factors of AKP's victory. After 2015 defecting founders and prominent members of AKP have increased. And after that number of AKP votes in the elections have reduced which now expected about %34 of Turkey's vote.

After notable reduction of AKP votes in the recent local elections there are more unhappy voices inside the party. And Ali Babacan appeared as one of the prominent face of this stage according to the published information Erdogan- Babacan meeting on the possibility to return Babacan to the cabinet did not work out and Babacan several times has affirmed that AKP has crossed those lines that it was formed for in 2002.

Although there is no official move yet but some of the sources said that is most likely Babacan in autumn this year will establish the new party. He is calling for justice and freedom, prominent people like Abdullah Gul, Nihat Argun, Huseyin Calik, Mehmet Simsek and Besir Atalay are with him, and except the AKP party line of 2002, youth and technocrats in Europe and US with some of the businessmen, liberal people and some of conservative Kurds are also supporting Babacan.

Some close people to AKP are expecting if Babacan start a new political party will get about %3-%4 votes. But close people to Babacan think will get %18 of the votes. Along with him also Ahmet Davutoglu has started new political actions but most people believes that he does not have much popularity therefore is more likely he will ally with one of the AKP factions either with Babacan or Erdogan.

### **Conclusion:**

At the moment not only the AKP but most of the important political parties in Turkey have internal problems. There are three factions within the Republican People's Party (CHP) Kemalists, nationalists and leftists. The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) also faced big division that finally the Iyi party split and until present both Iyi and MHP got internal issues. The People's Democratic Party (HDP) got covered internal problems between nationalists and leftists, and got potentials for problems between pro-Ocalan members with others.

In the past nearly two decades, AKP has been in power and therefore had impact on the relations between Erbil-Ankara and Ankara relations with Kurds in Turkey. Possibility of split inside AKP will push the party to become more nationalist or start new process to reconcile with the Kurds. But so far indications are more telling that the first option is more likely. If Babacan establish a party the Turkish internal politics will change and balances will be reshaped. Even if he does not start a party and make a deal with Erdogan still the AKP policy will change.

For the Kurdistan region is better to consider such changes in its relations with Turkey. Despite that AKP is still most powerful party of Turkey but internal unhappy voices and opposition parties should be taking into account. Expand relations with different parties of Turkey is in the interest of KRG that means need to think of post- AKP era as well.