

AKP's Attitude towards Constitutional Court's Prep Schools Decision

News:

Turkey's Constitutional Court blocked on Monday the government's decision either to close prep schools or to convert them to private schools by a large majority. Following this decision, prep schools will not be closed. (Agencies)

Comment:

Opposition parties had applied to the Constitutional Court for the abolition of the regulations to close prep schools in Turkey. The court issued its final verdict, not giving the green light to prep schools' closure. The court reasoned verdict on the issue will be announced later. However Court Members voting against the law argue that the amendment in the education law introduced by the AKP that seeks to abolish prep schools is against Articles 13, 42 and 48 of the Constitution...

There are 3600 prep schools across Turkey. The National Education Ministry proposed a frame where prep schools could convert to private schools called basic-high-schools after 4-year-transition period. About 2200 of these prep schools applied for this at the National Education Ministry. However; only 900 of them obtained a license. If the Constitutional Court had not annulled the law, all prep schools would have been shut down by September 1 of this year.

The prep schools issue was viewed as the cartridge initializing the conflict between the AKP and the Gülen Movement. The prep schools were seen as the manpower funding for the Movement. Consequently, the AKP initiated operations against the Movement, convinced the public, and to some extent, sought to preclude the Movement, as the movement educated children in prep schools in its own schools. Thus its power grew both within the country and abroad.

The prep schools have never been the true reason for the quarrel. The AKP wanted to diminish and to reduce the Movement's power and impact on the government and governmental institutions. At this point; the Movement has lost impact in the public and even if only partially, it attenuated due to the clash between the AKP and the Movement. However, during these two years, the AKP was not able to make the steps it desired. No prep schools could be replaced by private schools, legal regulations are still incomplete and additional weekend courses remained insufficient.

Even though Prime Minister Davutoğlu responded by saying "let's wait for the reasoned verdict then we'll do what is necessary", the fact that there was no reaction by neither the President nor other authorities, shows that the government is not very uncomfortable with this decision. Under normal conditions, the President and the Government should have given an urgent and strong response. Of course this decision was not taken despite the Government. Also it seems that the Government, who seeks to generate a "new Turkey" picture through replacing the picture of polemic before the elections in Turkey, wants to respect the decision in order to create an image of respect of the law.

Additionally, the government would have to pass a new law against the Court's decision. However, this is a low probability due to the parliament being on holidays until September as well as the parliamentary arithmetic preventing the AKP from passing a new law. Naturally, the AKP would not benefit from a policy of quarrel during these days where messages of consensus are delivered.

Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Musa Bayoglu