**Turkey’s 2023 Elections: Life-or-Death**

The election on May 14 of Turkey is a pivotal moment for the country and beyond that for security in Europe and the Middle East. It falls 100 years after the foundation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s secular republic and, if Erdoğan wins, he will be empowered to put even more of his stamp on the trajectory of a geostrategic heavyweight of 85 million people.

There will be two elections held on 14 May where voters will choose their new president, and also 600 members of parliament. For the presidential elections, if no candidate can secure at least 50% of the votes, a second run-off will be held on 28 May between the top two runners. Around 61 million voters will head to the ballot box on election day and it is estimated that 3 million voters abroad will likely cast their votes in advance, between 27 April and 9 May.

After two decades in power, Erdoğan is facing a concerted challenge. Polls show his main rival, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the head of CHP a former accountant and longtime bureaucrat, has a slight edge. According to Metropoll survey company, which is one of the prestigious one, It is possible to predict a very strong turnout for the May 14 elections. With about a month to go, 84% of voters say they will definitely vote, and 11% say that they will most likely do so. When we add the 2% who say they may vote, it seems that 97% of the electorate are inclined to cast their ballot. The tendency to vote is being encouraged by the fierce political struggle between the government and the opposition, the polarized environment and the characterization of the elections as a matter of life or death for the political blocs. We might see record participation on May 14.

The current system makes the election of the president, who has executive powers, extremely important. The real rivalry between leaders takes place in the presidential election. The candidates for that contest have been officially announced by the YSK. Four men are standing. The main conflict is expected to take place between the People's Alliance candidate Erdogan and the Nation Alliance candidate Kılıçdaroglu. However, the presence of Muharrem Ince and Sinan Ogan will determine whether the election will end in the first round or go to the second round. With four candidates, none of them achieve the 50% +1 required to be elected in the first round. While Kılıçdaroglu receives 43%, Erdogan's has 41%. Ince gets 5% and Ogan gets 2%. Nine percent of the electorate are undecided or refuse to show their colors. Kılıçdaroglu is narrowly ahead in the presidential race, but it should not be forgotten that Erdogan has the advantage

of control of the government and media.

All these mean that Turkey is facing a very neck to neck election results. And this is not only an ordinary election this is an election of life or dead for Turkey.