

Turkey's presidential candidates

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan is expected to be announced as the ruling party's candidate for Turkey's first direct presidential election in August



Recep Tayyip Erdogan

- Buoyed by strong showing of his Islamist-rooted **AK Party** in March local elections, despite corruption scandal and anti-government protests last summer

- Erdogan, who aspires to transform presidency into strong executive, remains widely popular despite alienating sections of society with his conservative agenda and aggressive style

- Support from Kurds, who make up 20% of Turkish population, could be key to Erdogan's success



Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu

- Renowned Islamic scholar and former head of **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**

- Named as joint presidential candidate by two main opposition parties – secularist **Republican People's Party (CHP)**, and nationalist **National Action Party (MHP)**

- Nomination seen as attempt to eat into AKP's conservative religious voter base, while winning support of secular Turks who accuse Erdogan of overseeing creeping Islamisation of state



Selahattin Demirtas

- Co-chairman of Turkey's main pro-Kurdish **People's Democracy Party (HDP)**

- HDP – sister party of **Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)** which dominates much of mainly Kurdish southeast – was formed late last year to fight mayoral elections in western Turkey, where Kurds are in minority

- Demirtas was sentenced to ten months in prison in 2010 for alleged links to **Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)**