



By: TA | AP Brief

Turkey's main opposition party reelects leader in a bid to avoid government crackdown



Turkey's main opposition party held a special congress on Sunday and reelected its current party leader as it fights what it calls moves by the **government** to replace its leadership.

Ozgur Ozel, the chairman of the Republican People's Party, or CHP, urged delegates to cast a vote of no-confidence at the start of Sunday's congress so as to initiate an election for leader, which he won with all 835 votes in his favor.

Party officials said the maneuver was meant to counter the possibility that courts may oust the current leadership and replace it with a government-approved trustee.

Prosecutors have accused CHP of electoral fraud, including buying votes and procedural violations, at its 2023 congress.

The CHP has denied the accusations, describing the legal action as a politically motivated attempt by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government to undermine the opposition through judicial pressure rather than democratic means.

Erdogan's government maintains Turkey's courts are impartial and free from political interference, insisting investigations into the party are solely focused on corruption.

A court was to issue a verdict on Sept. 15, but the ruling was delayed until October.

Waves of arrests

Critics view the case as part of a broader crackdown on the CHP, which made significant gains in last year's local elections.

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Among those targeted is Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, who **remains** in pre-trial custody on corruption charges he denies. Imamoglu is widely seen as a potential challenger to Erdogan and his March arrest triggered widespread **protests**.

Earlier this month, a court **removed** the CHP's elected provincial leadership in Istanbul and appointed an interim chairman to oversee the local branch.

Police escorted the court-appointed official to the party's Istanbul headquarters, using pepper spray to disperse party members and supporters who resisted his arrival.