THE GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TURKEY
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SOVEREIGNTY BELONGS TO THE NATION WITHOUT ANY RESTRICTION OR CONDITION
The Grand National Assembly is the gist of the Turkish nation's age-old quests and a vivid symbol of her consciousness to national self-rule.
INTRODUCTION

It has been 85 years since the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) first convened on 23 April 1920.

The process that our heroic founders began 85 years ago has been handed down from generation to generation and continues to march on.

Now we are proceeding toward our dream of a great Turkey, a free Turkey. Resolutely we carry on high the flag of an independent Turkey that the great leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his compatriots entrusted to us. To celebrate in glory the 85 years of our Parliament, we proclaim the year of 2005 the "The Year of National Sovereignty."

Our intention in proclaiming this year "The Year of National Sovereignty" and in the wide-reaching celebrations that we have prepared is to spread the concepts of national will, democracy, and freedom to every sector of society, to every individual. In this way, our Parliament, of which we are so proud, will become better known, our democratic culture will develop, and the consciousness of citizenship will be reinforced.

In addition, in order to achieve social harmony we want to create new means for dialogue and to establish a common ground for solving problems.

There will also be many works covering a wide variety of topics published in connection with this year. The books have been prepared by experts on the Parliament and are presented for your perusal. The work that you are holding, "The Turkish Grand National Assembly" is one of these. This booklet explains the parliamentary developments in our country from the Ottoman period to the present time, as well as providing an in-depth examination of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

We hope that these works will help to make the Parliament, the Members of Parliament, the parliamentary system and democracy better understood.

Bülent Arınç
Speaker of the TBMM
(Turkish Grand National Assembly)
I - PARLIAMENTARY LIFE IN THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

The First Ottoman Constitution and the First Parliament

After the military coup of 30 May 1876 in which Sultan Abdülaziz was removed from the throne, Murat V was appointed as Sultan by a group of officials (Mithat Pasha, the Head of the Military Avni Pasha, Süléyman Pasha, etc); the new Sultan promised that the country would be given a constitution. But, in just the first few weeks of his reign, Murat V, about whom it was rumored that he was mentally disturbed, was removed from the throne. On 1 September 1876 his brother, Abdülhamit II, took his place, and kept the promise of his brother, with preparations for a constitution beginning on 7 October 1876. To prepare the constitutional draft, known as the Kanun-i Esası, a 28-person committee, headed up by Mithat Pasha, was set up. One of the first decisions made by the committee was that a Meclis-i Umumi (General Assembly) was to be established made up of mebus (deputies) and ayan (senators). On 7 November a sub-committee was set up; the result of the work of this sub-committee was the constitutional text that was promulgated on 23 December 1876.

The Kanun-i Esası based itself on the 1830 Belgium constitution and was made up of 119 articles. The first five articles listed and defined the rights of the Sultan. The Caliphate, which was protected by the Ottoman Empire, would belong to the eldest member of the Ottoman dynasty (2nd, 3rd and 4th articles). According to Article 5, the Sultan was not accountable to anyone for his actions. The appointment and dismissal of ministers (heyet-i vâkela), the minting of money, having sermons read in his name, the signing of treaties with foreign states, the proclamation of war or peace, the control of the application of Shariat laws, the reduction or lifting of punishments that had been given according to the law, the convening or dissolution of parliament were all rights that belonged solely to the Sultan (Article 7).

The 8th article stated that all those people who had citizenship of the Ottoman Empire were to be known as “Ottoman”; the Article 9 stated that all Ottomans, as long as they did not interfere in the freedom of others, enjoyed personal freedom. According to the Constitution, the

The Opening ceremony of the General Assembly in Dolmabahçe Palace
official religion of the state was Islam (Article 11), and as long as people behaved in accordance with the law and general morals, then all who lived within the borders of the Ottoman Empire were entitled to freedom of religion.

In the eyes of the new Kanun-i Esasi all Ottoman citizens were equal, everyone possessed the same rights and duties toward the motherland, the official language of the state was Ottoman Turkish, taxes would be applied according to the tax-payer’s ability to pay, private property was outside the public domain and could not be confiscated without sufficient compensation, dwellings were not to be interfered with, torture and cruel treatment were forbidden, judges could not be dismissed, trials were to be public and the courts were not be interfered with, while the Grand Vizier, the Sheikh-ul-Islam, and other ministers were to be appointed by the Sultan.

According to the Kanun-i Esasi it was necessary to get prior permission from the Sultan to propose a law and the Sultan had the power of veto. This meant that the parliament did not possess any legislative authority, while the Meclis-i Umumi as a whole only had this authority to a limited extent (other than matters concerned with the budget). The executive authority belonged completely to the Sultan, who could also appoint and dismiss ministers. There were also conditions listed in the Constitution that in order to become a minister one had to have won the confidence of the Sultan and that he must have approved of one’s actions.

The Kanun-i Esasi was promulgated on 23 December 1876, and in the elections that followed, only men were allowed to vote. In a regulation made outside the Constitution, it was suggested that the elections should consist of two stages; according to this, the deputies would not be elected directly by the people, but rather by the administrative assemblies of provincial divisions. In Istanbul and surrounding areas the secondary electors would choose them. The first Ottoman General Assembly (Meclis-i Umumi) was opened by a speech from the Sultan on 19 March 1877. There were 69 Muslim and 46 non-Muslim Members of Parliament. According to the Kanun-i Esasi, the Members of Parliament had to swear allegiance to the Sultan.

Despite everything, the house of the Meclis-i Umumi that had been elected, that is the chamber of deputies, or the Meclis-i Mebusan, put the government and administrative supervisory authorities into a rather difficult position by over-stepping the bounds of their authority. Although the Constitution had not given the Parliament the authority to dismiss ministers, it had given them the right to send some members held responsible to the High Court (Divan-i Ali). The Members of Parliament were not shy of using this right to send some members held responsible to the High Court. Such actions led to the dissolution of the Meclis-i Mebusan by the Sultan on 28 June 1877.
The Second General Assembly, elected in January 1878 as stipulated by the Constitution, dismissed the Grand Vizier from his post in the first days after it had been convened although it did not have the authority to do so and because of this, the sultan announced that the Assembly was to be adjourned for a non-determined period on 14 February 1878.

Thus, not only was the Parliament abolished, but also the Kanun-i Esasi was abrogated, returning the country to the condition it found itself in before December 1876.

The Meclis-i Umumi was bicameral: the two houses were the Meclis-i Mebusan and the Meclis-i Ayan. All the members of Parliament were free to speak their mind and to take part in votes as long as they did not abuse the laws of the body to which they belonged. They would not be subject to any investigations for such actions. In both houses, if more than half of the members were not present a session could not begin. All speeches were to be made in Ottoman Turkish, and ballots could be made either openly or secretly, according to the situation. Laws that were accepted by both houses of the Parliament had to be approved by the ministers and of the Grand Vizier before being presented to the Sultan.

The members of the Senate (Meclis-i Ayan) were to be appointed by the Sultan on the condition that the number of Senators was not to exceed one-third of the number of Members of the Lower House. In order to be appointed as a Senator, one had to have won the confidence of the public, to have been successful in public service, to be well-known, and not to be under the age of 40. Senators were appointed for life; they could only leave the post at their own request by resigning. The number of members in the lower house (Meclis-i Mebusan) was to be calculated as 1 member for every 50,000 male Ottoman citizens. The members of this house were elected by a secret ballot, according to a special law.

The Re-Proclamation of the Constitution and the Opening of Parliament

Officers who were members of the İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Society for Union and Progress) and the troops under their command began a revolt in Thessalonica, demanding that the Sultan reinstate the Kanun-i Esasi; on 23 July 1908 the Constitution was reinstated. In Ottoman history this event is known as “The Proclamation of Liberty.”
The elections that were held in November and December secured a majority for the Society for Union and Progress (SUP) in the Parliament. The new Meclis-i Umumi was opened, as had happened before, by a speech from the Sultan. This period is one that was truly dominated by the Society for Union and Progress. Political and social upheavals were continuous and the revolt begun in protest to the Union and Progress gave rise to the invasion of Istanbul by the army located in Macedonia on 15 April. Martial law was implemented and a large majority of those who had opposed the Union and Progress were executed. The Parliament removed Sultan Abdülhamid from the throne on 27 April 1909, putting his brother Mehmet Reşad in his place.

This was a change desired by the members of Union and Progress, and the realization of it put the control of the government into their hands. On 10 July 1908 the Meclis-i Mebusan was convened once again. A commission was set up to determine what changes needed to be made to the 1876 Kanun-i Esasi. The text prepared by this committee was accepted on 8 August 1909. The changes in the Constitution made the government and ministers accountable to the Parliament and the Sultan’s power to dissolve the Parliament was limited. Moreover, the condition that a Member of Parliament could only propose a new law after it had been approved by the Sultan was lifted and the absolute veto right of the Sultan was restricted; he was now only able to send bills back to the Parliament.

Changes in the Constitution continued over the years, but these were not carried out in a consistent manner. During this period, known as the Second Meşrutiyet (Constitutional Monarchy), which consisted of 6 electoral periods, all the Parliaments that had been elected were dissolved.

**Invasion of the Country and the Acceptance of the Misak-ı Millî (The National Pact)**

The Society for Union and Progress took total control of the Parliament after the elections of April 1914, and from this date on the SUP was in a position of actual power. The Ottoman State was defeated in World War One, a war that was entered into according to the will of the Society for Union and Progress. The Montreux Armistice was signed on 30 October 1918. The signing of this treaty opened the way to invasion and the parceling out of Ottoman territory by the Entente Powers. In reply to this, the Anatolian people set up a number of independent organizations that were to struggle for the liberty of the country.

On the death of Mehmet Reşad in July 1918, his brother Vahdettin Efendi ascended to the throne; on 21 December 1918 Vahdettin Efendi dissolved Parliament (the 1909 constitutional changes recorded above had been annulled by a change in 1914). After the dissolution of Parliament, the Sultan started to govern the country, largely...
The Army Troops on the Gallipoli front

employing extraordinary measures. Immediately after the elections for a new Parliament in December 1919, the Parliament convened on 12 January 1920.

The election, which the Sultan was forced to hold because of the pressure put on him by the resistance in Ankara, provided an opportunity for many of those who upheld or organised the resistance movement to enter the Parliament. Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatürk), although he did not participate in the meetings, was sent as the representative from Erzurum.

The people reacted against the Montreux Armistice and the parceling out of the Ottoman state among the Entente; many entered regional or national associations in order to put up resistance to the enemy. Mustafa Kemal Pasha began to direct the resistance movement in Anatolia from under one central authority, and with his arrival in Samsun in May 1919, the movement gained power and speed. Other pashas, like Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebeşoy, who had been in Anatolia before, gave their support to Mustafa Kemal Pasha, and soon the people’s resistance began to take on a more professional air.

While the people of Anatolia and Thrace were actively fighting against the invasion, the supporters of independence in the Parliament were putting up a fight there. The group established by these people, known as the Felah-ı Vatan (Salvation of the Motherland) did not hesitate to give open support to the efforts of the people. The National Pact, or Misak-ı Milli, were part of the on-going struggle and were secretly adopted by the Parliament on 28 January 1920. This development opened the way for more pressure to be put on all Members of Parliament, in particular the leaders of the Felah-ı Vatan group.

The English, who invaded Istanbul on 16 March 1920, began to put pressure on the Parliament, especially the members of the Felah-ı Vatan. In the end, leading MPs, like Hüseyin Rauf (Orbay) and Kara Vastı, were arrested and sent into exile. The Parliament protested against this action and adjourned the proceedings on April 2. Seeing this as his opportunity, the Sultan gave the order for the Parliament to be dissolved.
Preparations for a New Parliament

The final end of the Meclis-i Mebusan opened the way for the establishment of a parliament in Anatolia. In any case, the decision for a new parliament had been given before the dissolution of the Meclis-i Mebusan. A communiqué sent by Mustafa Kemal Pasha on 19 March 1920 announced this good news. According to the communiqué, elections were to be held throughout the country in order to convene a parliament that would have extraordinary powers. Also, it was stated that the place where this parliament would convene would be Ankara. The members of the dissolved Meclis-i Mebusan were called to be members of the new parliament.

Of course, the decision for a new parliament with extraordinary powers was not one that was taken readily. In connection with this, the leader of the movement, Mustafa Kemal Pasha, took up the leadership at local meetings from the moment he set foot in Anatolia. On 21 June 1919 he met with Rauf Orbay, Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Refet Bele in Amasya and prepared a circular. Known as the Amasya Tamimi (Amasya Circular), this document stated that the country was under threat due to the ineffectiveness of the Istanbul Government, and that only the determination and resolution of the people would be able to save it.

After Amasya, Mustafa Kemal Pasha intended to be at the Erzurum Congress on 10 July. Those members who were skeptical about Mustafa Kemal Pasha joining the congress at the beginning (those representatives from Trabzon, Erzurum, Sivas, Bitlis and Van) underwent a change in attitude when Kazım Karabekir Pasha became involved. Finally, the Erzurum Congress opened under the Presidency of Mustafa Kemal Pasha on 23 July 1919 and ended on 7 August. The Congress produced a circular consisting of 10 articles; the unity of the country was emphasized and it was made clear that there would be resistance against the invasion. In addition, an executive committee, known as the Heyet-i Temsilîye (representative committee), was set up with Mustafa Kemal Pasha being selected as president.

Another congress, which enjoyed wider participation, was held in Sivas from 4-11 September; it was decided here to bring together all the resistance organizations under the title of Anadolu ve Rumeli Mîdafâaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti (Society for the Protection of Rights of Anatolia and Rumeli). Moreover, it was decided that the 16-member committee would be headed by Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

The Opening of the Grand National Assembly

After the elections announced by Mustafa Kemal Pasha were held, those chosen in the elections from the provinces and a group of Members of Parliament from the dissolved Meclis-i Mebusan met to make decisions in Ankara. From the branches of the Mîdafâaa-i Hukuk movement 232 members had been chosen; there were 92 members of the former Parliament, making a total of 324 Members.
of Parliament. Due to the prevalent conditions in the country at that time, only 115 Members of Parliament were able to attend the opening of Parliament.

Under the conditions of the time it was not possible to find a new parliamentary building for the Parliament; a stone building that was being used by the Society for Union and Progress Club but that had not yet been finished was chosen instead. The portions of the single-story building that were unfinished were completed. With the support of the public and equipment and furniture provided by local schools, the Parliamentary Building was prepared for the opening. In a communiqué broadcast on 21 April the public was informed that the new Parliament would convene on 23 April and the opening ceremony would take place on the same day.

On the awaited day everybody gathered around the Parliament Building in the morning. The new Parliament was opened with prayers read after the Friday Prayer at the Hacı Bayram mosque and 115 Members of Parliament partook in the first session of the Parliament. The eldest Member of Parliament, Şerif (Avkan) Bey from Sinop, acted as Speaker. The Parliamentary Rules of Procedure that had been established under the Ottomans was taken as the basis to begin procedures.

**Naming the Parliament**

The first meeting of the Parliament was presided over by the Member of Parliament from Sinop, Şerif Bey; he used the phrase “Grand National Assembly” in his opening speech, where he said the following:

“We are all aware that Istanbul is temporarily under siege by foreign powers and all the foundations, as well as the post of the Caliphate and the independence of the center of government, have been destroyed. In such a situation, if we merely bow our heads, then we are telling our people to accept slavery to foreigners. However, in order to enjoy complete freedom we must make bold decisions and our people, who have always been free and in the lead, resolutely and completely refuse to be enslaved; they have immediately begun to appoint representatives to the highest Assembly. I have the honor of being the eldest member of this exalted assembly and with the help of Allah I take on the responsibility of the internal and external independence of the people, which is their predestined fate; announcing to the world that the people now govern themselves, I declare the Grand National Assembly open.”
In this opening speech, in which independence, freedom, and national sovereignty were emphasized, the description of the Parliament as the “Grand National Assembly” caught everyone’s attention. Indeed, although there were other suggestions for a name, this is the one that everyone quickly adopted and Mustafa Kemal Pasha used this expression in all his speeches. On 8 February 1921, the name was officially adopted by a Cabinet Decree.

The First Government and Administrative Decisions

The Grand National Assembly (hence the TBMM), which was seen as a constituent Assembly with extraordinary authority, gave itself not only legislative but also executive authority. In a meeting on the second day after the opening, in a vote in which 120 Members of Parliament took part, 110 voted Mustafa Kemal Pasha as the President of the Parliament, with the Erzurum Member of Parliament, Celalettin Arif Bey, being chosen as Vice-President, with 109 votes.

Under the presidency of Mustafa Kemal Pasha a Temporary Executive Council was established, consisting of 7 members. On 29 April the Law of Treachery to the Motherland (Hıyanet-i Vataniye Kanunu) was passed, which stated that the aim of the Assembly was “to save the lofty Caliphate and Sultanate from foreign powers” and that anyone who opposed this would be seen as a traitor.

On 2 May the Executive Council passed the Law Concerning Methods of Election of the Members of the Cabinet. This law officially brought about the system of parliamentary government based on the essence of unified power.

On 7 June 1920 a law was passed that stated that as from 16 March 1920, the date when Istanbul had been invaded, all agreements and actions taken by the administration in Istanbul, except those approved of by the TBMM, were invalid. This, in effect, meant that the decrees of Istanbul government, officially and de facto, were null and void.

On 4 November 1920 an important change was made to the Law Concerning Methods of Election of Members of the Cabinet. According to this, the executive representatives, i.e. members of the Cabinet instead of being selected directly from the Members of Parliament were to be chosen from among candidates selected by the President of the Parliament. Although there was much discussion on the matter, the result remained the same.

The Speaker of the Assembly Mustafa Kemal Atatürk while delivering his Speech in the Floor.
**International Relations**

The first international treaty that the TBMM carried out was the Kümrü Peace Treaty, signed with the Armenian Republic on 3 December 1920. With this treaty, the eastern front was closed, and the troops here were sent to the west of the country. In the treaty made with Russia on 16 March 1921, the newly founded state and the national borders as set out in the *Misak-i Milli* were for the first time recognized by a foreign state. After the Victory of Sakarya, the Ankara Treaty (20 October 1921) signed with the French ensured the withdrawal of this country. At the end of the year, Italy followed France.

August 1922 was the date when the TBMM proclaimed victory. By 18 September there were no invading forces left in Anatolia, and all the countries, including Great Britain, signed the Mudanya Treaty on 11 October 1922. After long talks at Lausanne (where the committee, chaired by Ismet Pasha (İnönü), represented the TBMM government) the Lausanne Peace Treaty was signed on 24 July 1923 and was approved by the Parliament on 24 August 1923. Although the Lausanne Treaty endorsed the borders desired by the TBMM government, there were still those who opposed it. After this treaty, the last of the British troops left Istanbul on 1 October 1923. Thus, the TBMM government and the new state that it represented was now free and recognized politically, legally, militarily, and economically.

**The 1921 Constitution**

The Turkish Grand National Assembly, which convened for the first time on 23 April 1920, officially began work on a new constitution after five months. The Parliament put onto its agenda the draft of a constitution prepared by the committee that was known at that time as the Executive Representatives; this was in fact the government. After being presented to the General Assembly, this text was then handed over to a special committee. The text that this committee produced after approximately 2 months work (18 November) began to be discussed by the Parliament, and was finally accepted on 20 January 1921.

The Constitution, known at that time as the *Teşkilat-i Esasîye Kanunu* (The Fundamental Law), was accepted according to the normal legal process of that time; that is, through deliberation. The 1921 Constitution, which was prepared within the framework of democratic fundamentals, was accepted under exceptional circumstances and without having the need to have a majority. This situation was a result of the TBMM having extraordinary authority at that time in its role as a constituent Assembly.

While passing the 1921 Constitution into law, the Parliament was still protecting the validity of the existing Ottoman Constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi*) in Istanbul. That is, the TBMM did not openly reject the Ottoman Constitution. Quite the reverse, in a letter sent by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk to the Grand Vizier, Tevfik Pasha, on 30 January 1921, Mustafa Kemal Pasha informed the latter that any rulings of the *Kanun-i Esasî* that did not contravene the 1921 Constitution were valid. Moreover, some provisions of the new Constitution were attributed to regulations found in the *Kanun-i Esasî*. However, Article 104 of the 1924 Constitution was to nullify the *Kanun-i Esasî*. 
The 1921 Constitution was drafted in order to meet the needs of an extraordinary time and to fill some of the vacuum that existed in the power structure. It consisted of 24 articles and the first 9 articles were concerned with the fundamental principles on which the state was based.

The first article of the Constitution states that sovereignty belongs to the people, without restriction or condition; by stating that the public has the right to decide on its own fate it is made clear that the form of government was republican. The second article states that legislative and executive powers belong to the Parliament (i.e., this is an assembly legal system); the third article states that Turkey is governed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly and states that it will be known as the Government of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

No need was seen to create a separate executive organ. Article 9 states that the Speaker is naturally the head of the Cabinet. Again in this article, the Speaker of the TBMM has the authority to sign in the name of the Parliament and with his representative power he has the authority to approve decisions made by committees. The organization of committees made up of deputies that have been assigned duties in the name of the Parliament is discussed in Article 9. The article of the constitution that was to be greatly debated in coming years was Article 7, where it is stated that the power to apply the religious laws (Shariat) is among the duties of the TBMM, although this Article was no longer practical. This regulation, which defines the religious character of the state, is a repetition of that found in the 1876 Constitution.

It was anticipated when the 1921 Constitution was first drawn up that the legal system would change over time until it took on the form necessary for an assembly system. In the changes made on 8 July 1922 an untitled presidential institution was established and it was given more power within the Cabinet; in this way the principle of shared responsibility was introduced. The law that was concerned with the proclamation of a Republic not only created the post of President, it also gave the title of “Prime Minister” to the head of the executive committee. The same regulation stated that the ministers had to show themselves as candidates for Prime Minister and that they would be elected by the Parliament.

The First Groupings

The Grand National Assembly witnessed the formation of groups in the very first days. There were many groups that dispersed soon after they were formed and which carried no weight. It is not possible to identify these as political parties or groups in the modern concept of the phrase. This formation of groups created its own problems as well. Mustafa Kemal Pasha was disturbed by these developments, and after meeting with representatives, the Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti, founded on 10 May 1921 after the Sivas Congress, formed a parliamentary group.
The Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaası-i Hukuk Cemiyeti was known as “The First Group” (later this group was to become the Republican People’s Party). Mustafa Kemal Pasha was the President of the First Group, and at the first meeting a majority of Parliament, 133 members, attended. The program of the First Group can be divided into two items, as follows:

a) To secure the National borders.
b) To organize the state according to the Constitution, step by step.

The Members of Parliament who did not join the First Group, which was with the government, were involved in individual work for a long time. In July 1922 the TBMM witnessed the formation of the İkinci Anadolu ve Rumeli Müdafaası-i Hukuk Grubu. This “Second Group” formed the opposition, and they had a three-stage program:

- a) To attain national unity within the National Borders and to secure independence
- b) To rearrange existing laws within the framework of national sovereignty
- c) To ensure the respect and immunity of general rights.

Though the numbers were low, these groups of representatives formed two independent groups and continued their work.

The Abolition of the Sultanate

At a secret meeting held during the War of Independence, on 23 July 1921, the Grand National Assembly discussed moving the headquarters for the parliament to Kayseri. To carry this out a committee was formed and sent to Kayseri.

The TBMM, which was interested in many subjects, including the war, once again met secretly on 4 August 1921 and appointed Mustafa Kemal Pasha as the Commander-in-Chief (the members of the second group opposed this). The heroic struggle of the Turkish Army ended with the “Great Victory” of 30 August 1922, and the invading forces were made to come to the table for talks.

The occupying forces (Britain, France, Italy and Greece) chose the city of Lausanne for peace talks and invited the governments both in Ankara and Istanbul to attend. At that date, although Istanbul was under occupation, the government there kept its existence. The Ottoman government proposed forming a joint committee with the Ankara government.

These developments created a great reaction in the National Assembly, and it was decided to abolish the Sultanate with utmost haste. This move had an immediate reaction; the last Grand Vizier, Ahmet Tevfik Pasha, immediately handed over his seal of state to the representative of the Ankara government in Istanbul, Refet Pasha. On 17 November 1922 the last Ottoman Sultan took refuge on a British battleship that took him to Malta. His nephew, Abdülmecit, now only represented the position of Caliph.

The decision of the First Parliament to abolish the Sultanate on 1 November 1922 (with a unanimous vote) not only removed the Sultan from the position of sharing power with the government, but it was also an important step that led toward the establishment of the state system as a Republic.
All these developments added power to the legitimacy of the Grand National Assembly. From now on the country, in the absolute sense of the phrase, was governed from Ankara. The Parliament not only chose the Speaker, but also the ministers and other executives. However, uncertainty reigned in a few matters, for example, in the relationship between the Parliament and the Caliph Abdülmecl. Mustafa Kemal Pasha felt very uncomfortable about this situation, and began to bring this matter onto the agenda through a number of means at the beginning of 1923 with the idea of proclaiming a Republic.

The Proclamation of the Republic

On the request of Mustafa Kemal Pasha an early election was announced in April 1923. This election marked the end of the First Grand National Assembly. According to a special article of the Constitution, the first Parliament was to meet without cessation until its aims had been realized. Whether or not the parliament had realized its goals was to be decided by a two-thirds majority. The decision to have an early election, arrived at by a simple majority, was carried out in the months of June-July-August, in two stages. Through changes made in the Hiyanet-i Vataniye (High Treason) Law of 15 April before the elections, the political activities of those groups and associations that were not part of the First Group were ended. The new Parliament consisted of representatives from the First Group.

At that time, the problem of non-confidence between the government and the Parliament resulted in the resignation of the government. Mustafa Kemal Pasha, taking advantage of the governmental vacuum, suggested to the Parliament that a Republic should be proclaimed, with a President, a Prime Minister appointed by the President and a cabinet system. The majority of the Parliament accepted this proposal and on 29 October 1923 the Republic was proclaimed. Thus, Mustafa Kemal Pasha became the first President and Ismet Pasha (Inönü) became the first Prime Minister.

The proclamation of the Republic led to a fierce debate between Ankara, which had now been proclaimed as the capital, and Istanbul. Some famous names of the War of Independence, who were found outside Ankara at the time of the proclamation, such as Kazım (Karabekir), Hüseyin Rauf (Orbay), Ali Fuat (Cebesoy), Adnan (Adıvar), and Refet (Bele), gave a variety of reactions. The Istanbul press gave much space over to these reactions. This situation was reflected in the Parliamentary Group of the Halk Fırkası and heated arguments took place.

The focus of the argument was the future position of the Caliph. While the tension continued between the sides, the new legislative year opened on 1 March 1924 and on 3 March the decision to abolish the Caliphate was taken. It was decided that the members of the Ottoman dynasty were to leave the country. On the same day, it was
The 1924 Constitution

The Parliament, convened in the middle of 1920, took the decision to create a new constitution at the beginning of 1924. As there were no candidates in the elections to the opposition party, the Second Group, the names put on the ballot were from those in power in the Parliament. Preparations for the Constitution could be carried out in a more systematic way now that the country had settled the corner and had left its distressing problems behind.

The draft prepared by the Constitutional Committee (Komiteye İstatı Eseri) was put on the Parliamentary agenda on 9 March 1924. In the preparatory stages, the committee studied the 1757 French Constitution and the 1923 Polish Constitution. The new Constitution, which consisted of 398 articles, was accepted by a majority of the TBMM on 20 April 1924.

The 1924 Constitution, the longest-lived constitution in Turkish history, was implemented for 36 years, and to a large extent, was in conformity with the constitutional understanding prevalent at the time.

In the 1924 Constitution, the state system was fundamentally the same as that of the previous constitution (the sovereignty of the people, the Republic, etc.). While legislative and executive power were invested in the Parliament and the Parliament was given the right to dissolve the government at any time, in contrast to this, the government did not have the right to dissolve Parliament. Moreover, the executive power was invested in the President and the Cabinet. The Constitution stipulated that a President was to be chosen by the Parliament for one legislative period, that the President was not politically accountable, and that he had the right of veto. The method of establishing the government and shared responsibilities was according to the parliamentarian system.

According to the 1924 Constitution, everyone had inalienable equality before the law. Torture, cruel or unusual punishment were forbidden. Personal freedom, freedom of conscience and religion as well as freedom of thought and expression were guaranteed. In addition to all civilian and political rights and freedoms. Independent courts were to be set up in the name of the people, and the judges would be appointed in an independent manner.

As far as economic and social rights were concerned, the 1924 Constitution undertook some changes in 1928, 1934 and 1937. The change urged on 18 April 1929 removed the legislation stating that the official religion of the state was Islam, opening the way for state secularism. The change of 5 December 1934 gave women the right to vote and to be elected. In the change of 5 February 1937, the state was described in "Republican, national, popular, liberal, reformed and secular" in the constitution.

The First Opposition Party

A group of deputies that belonged to the party in power, the Cumhuriyet Halk Pazar (Republican People's Party), consisting of the Rad (Ortay) Paşa, Ali Fuat (Çeşme) Paşa, Refet (Beşiktaş) Paşa, and Kazım (Kartalbaşı) Paşa withdrew from the party, as they were displeased with the actions of the Parliament and the government: they started to search for a new party. The President Mustafa Kemal, upon hearing of these developments, expressed his reaction while on a trip to Samsun as follows: "Under the conditions in which we find ourselves at the present time, the idea of coexistence is not appropriate." Despite this approach, on 18 November 1924 Mustafa Kemal's close friends published the program of the first opposition party to be represented in the Grand National Assembly. The new party took the name of (Cumhuriyet Cumhuriyet Partisi) (The Progressive Republican Party), and began to set up branches throughout the country, starting with Istanbul.

In December of 1924 Kazım Kartalbaskı was elected as President of the party, Doctor Adnan Altay and Hoşayn Rauf Orbay as joint vice-presidents, while the general secretary, chosen was Ali Fuat (Çeşme). The TCF put up a fierce opposition to some of the matters that the government had suggested to the Parliament, such as the Taksim-Sultan Law (Maintenance of Order Law) and the judicial courts that dealt with any crimes committed against the state or the reforms introduced by the State.

With the ending of the legislative period of the Parliament on 20 April 1925, the TCF as per their charter, began to work towards a congress. The charter stated that after holding congresses of provincial branches in May that a National Congress would be held in June. But none of this happened; on 5 May the Ankara Judicial Court applied to the government to close the TCF. Despite this, the Istanbul TCF association, in which former members of the Union and Progressive Party were active, carried on their activities, holding a regional congress on 15 May. The General Secretary of the TCF, Ali Fuat (Çeşme) made statements defending the legality of the opposition in answer to articles in the media, which was on the side of the government. Finally, in a meeting on 5 June the government took the decision to close down all branches and central offices of the TCF. This decision was officially declared on 5 June 1925.

A number of actions with political intentions were shown as being in conflict with the Munzıda's Munzıda (the Law of Treasons to the Motherland) Law and were given as the reason for the party having to be closed down. However, not one member of the TCF was tried with a crime that would have been the cause of closing a party. Despite the central and branch offices being closed down, the official existence of the TCF continued for a while. Only, the buildings of the TCF had been closed down and the central Committee Group of the TCF continued to come together to carry out their business. For example, the Prime Minister, who was defending policies carried out according to the Taksim-Sultan Laws (Maintenance of Order Law), was faced with a negative block vote made by 21 TCF members, on 9 November 1925. Many of the TCF members came before the Judicial Courts, which were set up after an attempt on President Mustafa Kemal's life in Izmir; some of them were even executed. On the insistence of the President Mustafa Kemal, the life of the Two Sums of Cendere and Sopi (SCF) Free Republican Party was established on 12 August 1929 under the leadership of the former prime minister, Fethi Okyar. Bin was even more short-lived. The party, which was established with the idea of leading new political expansions in the country, won a minor position in the elections of 1930. The head of the party, closed the party down himself. The supporters of the government accused the party of numerous crimes, on 17 November 1930. From this date until 1945 no such other action was seen.

The Secularization of the State

With the introduction of a law in 1928 the TBMM made a fundamental change in the religious qualification of Republican Turkey. The second article of the 1924 Constitution starts by saying: "The religion of the Turkish state is Islam." On 21 April 1937, this phase was removed. Thus, after this change in 1928, Islamic law, which affects familial relationships in particular, was no longer officially the religion of the new state. In later years, with new regulations and the passing of secularism into the Constitution in 1937, it became clear that the Turkish Republican State had taken on the characteristics of secularism.
THE POLITICAL CLIMATE AFTER WORLD WAR II

[Image of a crowd in front of a building]
New Quests after the Second World War

Like many other countries in the world, Turkey followed policies that were isolationist in nature until the end of the Second World War. In this period, in which the Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası (Republican People’s Party) was dominant, regular elections continued to be held. After the end of the war, Turkey, like the rest of the world, rapidly embarked on political and economic quests.

After the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, İsmet İnönü was elected President; in his opening speech on 1 November of the legislative year of 1944, he emphasized the importance of the democratic parliamentary characteristic of the Turkish political system. In another speech given on 19 May 1945, President İnönü promised that precautions would be taken to ensure that the regime would be more democratic.

Transition to Multi-party System

A proposal submitted to TBMM in May 1945, which aimed at the balanced distribution of lands among farmers, is an important milestone both in Turkish parliamentary history and Turkish political life. According to this proposal, the people who had larger lands would allocate a part of those lands to those who had none or smaller lands. According to this proposal, a part of the larger lands might be expropriated as well.

A group of deputies objected to this proposal, which was being negotiated in the assembly at that moment. Speaker of this group was Adnan Menderes who was also a landowner. The proposal was enacted despite the opposition within the party. Thereafter, four deputies (Adnan Menderes, later President of the Republic Celal Bayar, Refik Koraltan and famous historian Fuat Köprüli) submitted a motion which was proposing the application of the Constitution and establishment of democracy. This motion known as “Four Motion” symbolized the restart of the organized political opposition. Except for Celal Bayar, these opposing deputies were departed from the party when they began to conduct their activities by means of the press.

Those events occurring in TBMM led to movements within the society in a very short time. More than twenty parties were established following the foundation of National Development Party in July 1945. In the meantime, the Republican People’s Party that was in power for long years began to expand within its body. This period is called as the transition to multi-party system in Turkey.

The Democratic Party (DP) was founded officially on 07 January 1946 under the leadership of Celal Bayar and it managed to take 62 out of 465 seats in the assembly after the elections held in the same year. The elections of 14 May 1950 held by secret voting and open allocation system were concluded with the victory of DP (DP acquired 408 deputies, CHP acquired 69 deputies).
Military Intervention and the 1961 Constitution

Until the military intervention of 27 May 1960 there were tense political scenes in the Grand National Assembly between the DP (Democratic Party) and the CHP (Republican People’s Party). In the first military intervention experienced in the history of the TBMM, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, President Celal Bayar, and all the ministers and Members of Parliament were arrested. The public was informed that the intervention had been carried out to “prevent a struggle among brothers” and “to extricate democracy from the crisis into which it had fallen.” The TBMM was closed; politics were forbidden, and the Milli Birlik Komitesi (Committee of National Unity), formed from those who had led the intervention, began to run the country. With the military coup came the end of the 1924 Constitution. The first action of the MBK was to inform the public, through a communiqué prepared by a group of law professors, that the action they had taken was not in contravention of the still valid 1924 Constitution. On 12 June the “Temporary Constitution,” prepared by another group of academics, was put into force.

The Temporary Constitution was in line with the 1924 Constitution; the contents were adapted to be in keeping with the philosophy and process of the military coup. According to the Temporary Constitution, the authority of the Turkish Grand National Assembly was turned over to the MBK immediately after the former had been closed down. The executive authority was to be used by ministers who were chosen by the MBK. The authority to appoint the ministers belonged to the Head of State (the Head of the MBK), while the authority to control the ministers and dismiss them if necessary also belonged to the MBK.

The members of the MBK who were trying to administer the country using the Temporary Constitution began to work on a new and comprehensive constitution. The constitutional draft prepared by the “Istanbul Commission,” formed from a group of jurists, was presented to the MBK on 17 October. This draft was not accepted; as a result the “Constituent Assembly” (Kurucu Meclis) was established and they began work on 6 January 1961. The Constituent Assembly was composed of members of the MBK and the Representatives’ Assembly. The Representatives’ Assembly, rather than being an elected assembly, consisted of some people who had been appointed by the MBK and certain representatives of the two parties of that time (CHP and CKMP). Other than this nucleus, there were representatives from various professional associations and some public officials that were included in the Representatives’ Assembly.

The constitutional text prepared by the Constituent Assembly was presented to the people in a referendum on 9 July 1961. It was accepted by 61.17% of the vote. The 1961 Constitution, the first prepared by a Constituent Assembly and the first to be presented to the people in a referendum, included innovations in many subjects. The first difference of the 1961 Constitution was that it was long and greatly detailed; it stipulated a typical parliamentary system. According to the Constitution, the legislative and supervisory authority belonged to the TBMM, while the executive authority, being invested in the President and the Cabinet, emanated from here; the judicial authority had been given over to independent courts.

Article 4 of the 1961 Constitution contained a regulation that had not been included before: “National sovereignty, according to the principles established in the Constitution, will be used by means of the authorized organs.” Thus, the principle of checks and balances, or the separation of powers, was introduced. Moreover, in the Constitution, the Republic had the attribute of “a state ruled by law” added to it, and there were regulations in keeping with this principle throughout the new Constitution. A Constitutional Court was
established to scrutinize the function of the legislative organ and the function of auditing the administration was left to the Council of State.

The legislative organ was separated into two houses: the National Assembly and the Republican Senate. The fact that the authority to conduct votes of confidence and censure motions lay with the National Assembly established the superiority of this body over the Republican Senate.

The 1961 Constitution considered political parties as “indispensable components of democratic politics” and henceforth provided them with constitutional security. The authority to close down political parties was given to the Constitutional Court. For the first time in the 1961 Constitution, a place was given in the state system to the Milli Güvenlik Kurulu (National Security Council).

The 1961 Constitution, which presented fundamental rights and freedoms over a wide spectrum, also stipulated detailed limitations on these in the same way. In addition, the Constitution placed many social duties onto the shoulders of the State. The Constitution of 1961 underwent many changes after the military memorandum of 12 March 1971, but continued to be in force until the military coup of 1980.

The 1982 Constitution

The mechanism established by the long and detailed rulings of the 1961 Constitution did not work well. The separation of power that had been established between the different organs made it difficult to establish cooperation between the institutions. Political and social instability led to crises. As a result, the country underwent a second military coup on 12 September 1980. The Constitution was suspended and political parties were closed down. Many of the politicians were forbidden from entering politics again.

The military power that had taken over the running of the country established a “Constituent Assembly,” as had been done in 1961. Within two years the new constitution was ready and it was presented to the people on 7 November 1982. The participation in the referendum was 91.27%. As a result, the 1982 Constitution was passed with 91.37% of the vote.

The greatest change that the 1982 Constitution brought about was the unicameral parliamentary system; that is there was a return to the republican tradition. The executive had been slightly empowered. New and more definite limits had been introduced on the limitation of freedoms. Autonomous institutions were given new statutes. Except for these aspects, the 1982 Constitution greatly resembled the 1961 Constitution.

After the 1982 Constitution began to be implemented the first general election was held. The parties that could participate did not include those who had been closed before. The newly formed Miliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi (Nationalist Democratic Party), Halkçı Parti (People’s Party), and the Anavatan Partisi (Motherland Party) took part in the elections held on 6 November 1983. The democratic process had begun once again.

In the general election for Members of Parliament, held on 20 October 1991, once again all politicians were free to be involved in politics; a great number of political parties were established without interference, while those who had had their rights to be involved in politics taken away from them were once again allowed back on the political scene. All the requirements for parliamentary democracy had been met and now, once again, democracy was enjoyed by all.

The 1982 Constitution, from the time it was accepted until the present time, has undergone many changes, especially the “integration laws” that have been introduced within the framework of the membership process for the European Union, which has led to a fundamental evolution. The TBMM is still making constitutional changes within this framework.
The Constitutional Position and Duties of the TBMM

The Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) is a single organ that is directly elected within the framework of the parliamentary tradition. “Sovereignty” is a right that belongs to the TBMM, but this right is limited in the Constitution as “being in the interest of the Turkish Nation,” and it cannot be used in a way that contravenes “the indivisible unity of the State and the Nation,” or the principles of “The historical and spiritual values of being Turkish” and “religious feelings cannot interfere with the working of the State.”

Article 4 of the Constitution, which has regulations concerning the “characteristics of the State” and Article 174, or “the Reform Laws,” both draw the boundaries of the sovereignty of the Parliament. The authority of the Parliament as a legislative organ cannot be used to change these articles and laws.

Again, according to the Constitution, legislative authority is used in the name of the Turkish nation, it belongs to the Parliament, and it cannot be handed over to another.

The fundamental function of the Parliament is to create laws. The laws are a legal procedure that defines the rights and responsibilities of the people. Another function of the TBMM other than law-making is reflected in resolutions (parliamentary decisions), the sending of a minister to the High Court, the ratification of international treaties, and the granting of authority to the Cabinet to make decisions on certain matters that will in effect be laws. The resolutions and laws made by the Parliament are scrutinized by the Constitutional Court.

The TBMM, as well as having legislative authority, is a supervisory organ; that is, it controls the government and has the authority to dismiss the government.

The Committees that are established within the framework of the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament carry out the basic legislative and supervisory functions of Parliament. These Committees that work in the name of the General Assembly of the TBMM not only take on legislative and supervisory roles in their areas of expertise, but they also carry out inquiry and investigations to enlighten members of Parliament and members of the public. The Human Rights Investigative Committee or the Investigation Committee into Corruption are among the Committees established solely with the aim to investigate, research, and report. The political parties are proportionally represented on the Committees according to the number of seats they hold in the General Assembly.
Rules of Procedure

The Rules of Procedure are defined as the rules and regulations that govern the establishment and the procedures of the Parliament; these are known as “the silent constitution” or “the hidden constitution.” Such names are unofficial, but the Rules of Procedure are so strong that they even stipulate how the Parliament is to change articles of the Constitution and therefore they play a major role in the politics of the country.

The main function of the Rules of Procedure, which were established by the TBMM itself, is to express and determine in detail the general rules for the legislative organ as a lawmaker. Despite this, the Rules of Procedure are not considered to be a law; rather they are a resolution (Parliamentary decision).

The first time the phrase “Rules of Procedure” was used in Turkey was in the 1961 Constitution; today’s charter still adheres to the conditions laid out in the 13 May 1877 Heyet-i Mebusan Nizamname-i Dahilisi. The TBMM that opened on 23 April 1920, after a few changes, functioned according to the same regulations. The existing Rules of Procedure of the TBMM regulates many subjects, from the establishment of the Parliament and its internal workings, to the structure of laws, voting and elections. The Bureau of the Assembly the TBMM, which is responsible for referral and administration, fulfills its duties according to the regulations or decisions that are made based on the authority given to it within the framework of the Rules of Procedure.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ELECTED MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

The existing legal statutes guarantee that every citizen of the Turkish Republic not only has the right to vote, but they also have the right to be elected. This right, other than in extraordinary situations, cannot be restricted, denied or in any way interfered with.

In Turkey, elections and public voting are free, equal, secret, single-staged, general, publicly counted and recorded, and carried out under judicial direction and inspection. Those citizens of the Turkish Republic who find themselves outside the country can also use their vote. However, their votes are to be used according to a different legal regulation.
The laws related to elections in Turkey have been arranged in such a way that they correspond to the principles of justice in representation and stability in governance. According to this principle, the elections for Members of Parliament are held once every five years, and are carried out according to 10% threshold countrywide. In order to preserve stability in the governance only those parties who garner more than 10% of the vote can enter Parliament; those who remain under this limit must carry on their work outside Parliament.

Every Turkish citizen who is 18 years old has the right to take part in elections and referenda. People who have been conscripted, students at military academies, people in prison, except those who have committed misdemeanors, cannot vote.

Those who are 18 can join any party or parties they wish. But there are exceptions to this rule, according to the duties or position a person holds. The people who cannot join parties are judges, prosecutors, members of higher judicial organs, including the Exchequer, members of public institutions and those who work as civil servants, other public servants who are not considered to be laborers because of the services they provide, members of the armed forces and students prior to higher education, and those whose positions are regulated by special laws (for example academics).

Turkish citizens who are thirty years of age and who fulfill the conditions for being a candidate stipulated in the Constitution (having finished primary school, completed military service, not having committed any embarrassing crimes or similar crimes, not being forbidden from holding a position in the civil service, not having partaken in any terrorist activities or any acts of incitement or provocation, etc.) can stand to be chosen as a Member of Parliament for the Turkish Republic. Judges and prosecutors, members of higher judiciary organs, teaching staff of higher education institutes and institutional members and members of the armed forces, as well as some other officials, cannot become candidates without first resigning from their post.
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Elections to the TBMM are held once every five years (in times of war this period can be lengthened) and 550 Members of Parliament are elected. The elections are free, equal, secret, single-staged, general and openly counted and documented. They are carried out under the direction of the Supreme Board of Elections and are inspected by the same. There is no other recourse for appeal.

A decision can be made to renew the election before the five years have been completed (i.e., an early election). This is a decision that is to be taken by the Parliament. Again, in order to prevent certain situations from arising, it is stipulated in the Constitution that the President must approve the decision. If a seat in Parliament is vacant, then there must be a bye-election. Bye-elections can only be held once in any election period and 30 months must have passed since a general election before a bye-election can be held. However, if the number of empty seats is 5% of the total number of seats, then the decision to hold a bye-election is made within 3 months. A bye-election cannot be held within one year from a general election. If there is no Member of Parliament in a province or surrounding areas, then a bye-election is held. Those Members of Parliament whose time of service is finished can be elected again.

It seems that it is impossible to hold an election due to the country being in a state of war then the Parliament can decide to postpone the elections for a year. If the reason for the postponement still exists after a year, this decision can be taken again. The authority of the Parliament to renew this decision can continue until a new Parliament has been chosen.

The duties of the Members of Parliament of the TBMM are limited to a certain time period. The Members of Parliament represent those who elected them, that is, the people. No matter how well defined, a constituency is that elects a representative, it is not that province, region or area that the elected member represents, but rather the nation as a whole.

The Members of Parliament are responsible for carrying out the duties of a deputy. These are, to create laws, to change and to annul laws, to supervise the Cabinet and the ministers, to give the Cabinet authority to make written decisions and legal rulings on certain matters, to discuss and pass laws concerning the budget and the audit, to decide on matters of mining and coinsage, to declare war, to approve the ratification of international agreements, to decide to decree pardons, both general and specific.

Members of Parliament cannot work on the executive board or as an auditor for any state or public organizations, or for any institution connected with these, or for any organization that is a partner of these, directly or indirectly, nor for non-profit organizations which are provided with income or special possibilities by the law, or for any trusts which are exempt from taxation, nor for any Chambers of Commerce, Trade or any others that are set up as public institutions, nor for unions or for any organization that is set up by the governing bodies of the unions. Again, Members of Parliament cannot be appointed to any public or private organization that is subject to the proposal, notification, appointment or approval of the cabinet.

**IMMUNITY AND NON-ACCOUNTABILITY IN FRONT OF THE LAW**

Members of Parliament have two separate privileges that are necessitated by their duties—non-accountability in front of the law and immunity from the law. Non-accountability means that a Member of Parliament cannot be held responsible for the way they vote or statements they make during the passing or scrutiny of a law, or for repealing these same outside of Parliament. Non-accountability in front of the law is absolute and permanent. Even after a Member of Parliament has stopped serving in the Parliament they can no longer be held accountable for how they voted, spoke or thought while fulfilling their duties in the Parliament.

Immunity from the law means that when it is claimed that a Member of Parliament has committed a crime before or after the elections that they cannot be questioned, arrested or tried without a decision being taken on the matter by Parliament. If a Member of Parliament is caught committing a felony or if questioning has already begun before the election or if the crime is directed toward destroying the unity of the State, then they are not covered by this immunity. In such cases, the authorized court must immediately and directly informs the Office of the Speaker.

Members of the Constitutional and Justice Committees form a Joint Committee in which a report concerning the immunity of the Member of Parliament under question is prepared. The Joint Committee decides whether the immunity should be lifted, preserved or preserved until such a time that the person involved ceases to be a minister. If the committee report recommends postponing legal proceedings, then the report is read to the General Assembly. If there are no written objections within 10 days, then the report is acted upon. If the committee report states that the immunity should be lifted and if there are no objections, then the report is debated in the General Assembly and a decision is taken here. If legal proceedings are postponed and this decision is not rejected by the General Assembly, then if the Parliament has newly convened, as long as the person in question continues to be a Member of Parliament then no legal proceedings can be instigated.

Any legal ruling concerning a Member of Parliament given before or after the elections cannot be implemented until the end of that person's time in office; the legal ruling cannot be enacted while they are a still a Member of Parliament. The questioning of and legal proceedings can only be implemented when the immunity is ended by a decision in the General Assembly. If a Member of Parliament cannot be questioned and legal proceedings cannot be enacted before the election or if the crime is caught committing a felony or if questioning is being taken on the matter by Parliament before the predetermined time-period has been completed, then there are three ways in which this can happen. The first happens when one of the conditions stated in the regulations occurs: the decision then rests with the President. The second way
that the Parliament can be dissolved is by a decision taken by the
Parliament itself (for early elections). The third circumstance under
which the Parliament can be dissolved is when the Parliament fails
to choose a new President.

The President has the authority to dissolve Parliament when a newly-
elected or current head of a government resigns, when a newly
established government does not get a vote of confidence or when
an existing government asks for a vote of confidence, but does not
receive it; if a new government cannot be established within a certain
period (45 days) the President orders the dissolution of the government.

The same situation can occur when as a result of a motion of censure
the government receives a vote of no-confidence; then if a new
government is not established within 45 days, or if the existing
government cannot receive a vote of confidence, the President has
the authority to dissolve Parliament, as defined by the “Law on the
Renewal of Elections of the Turkish Grand National Assembly.” In
addition to the conditions listed above, the Parliament can be dissolved
as a result of elections for President. If, after the fourth round of
votes, a President has not been chosen by Parliament with an absolute
majority, then a new election for Members of Parliament must be
held.

When a Member of Parliament
Leaves his Post

Despite there being a pre-defined period that a person serves as a
Member of Parliament, there are a number of ways that a Member
of Parliament can leave his post. These are, the resignation of the
Member of Parliament, a ruling that the Member of Parliament has
committed a crime that prevents or restricts him from taking up his
position, if the Member continues to commit acts that are not
appropriate to their position, the dissolution of Parliament, the
participation of the Member beyond the predetermined time without
excuse or permission, if a Member is the cause of the permanent
closure of his party and the failure to elect a President. If the TBMM
takes a decision to dismiss a Member of Parliament, then only the
Constitutional Court can overturn this decision. But if the circumstances
are reversed, i.e., if the TBMM refuses to dismiss a Member of
Parliament, the Constitutional Court cannot be applied to for an
overruling of this decision.
BUREAU OF THE ASSEMBLY

Bureau of the Assembly consists of the Speaker, four Deputy Speakers, seven Clerical Members and three Administrative Members. The number of clerks and administrators can be increased with a proposal made by the Advisory Council, with the approval of the General Assembly. The proportion of representatives present in the Parliament from each party is reflected in the Bureau of the Assembly.

From the beginning of the legislative period until the actual Bureau of the Assembly has been chosen, an Interim Bureau of the Assembly carries out the work within the framework of certain procedures. At the start of the legislative period, the eldest Member of Parliament acts as Interim Speaker. The duties of the Interim Speaker continue from the first sitting of the house until the actual Speaker has been elected. During this period, the second eldest Member is appointed as the Interim Deputy Speaker, while the youngest six members act as temporary Clerical Members.

The Speaker of the TBMM is also the Head of the Bureau. The political parties cannot nominate a candidate for the office of Speaker. The candidates must stand of their own volition. There are two elections for Speaker for every legislative period. The period of duty after the first election is two years, while that after the second election is three years. The same Member can be chosen as Speaker for both legislative periods.

The Interim Bureau of the Assembly must be notified of which Members of Parliament are standing for candidate for the office of Speaker any time from the first day that the Parliament gathers until, at the latest, five days later. The election of the Speaker must be made no later than five days after all the candidates have been chosen.

The election of the Speaker is carried out secretly. In the first two rounds of voting, the candidate must secure two-thirds of the vote, while in the third round the candidate must have an absolute majority. If the candidate cannot secure an absolute majority in the third round, then a fourth round is to be held between the two candidates who received most of the votes. The candidate who gets most of the votes in the fourth round is elected as Speaker.

Members of Parliament from each party are sent to the Bureau of the Assembly in proportion to their representation in the Parliament. This process is carried out under the supervision of the Speaker. The
Speaker establishes the number of the places on the Bureau that falls to each political party according to the percentage of members each party has in the Parliament and informs the Advisory Council accordingly.

There are four deputy speakers. Of these, two belong to the political party that has an absolute majority in the number of seats in the Parliament, while the other two are shared out among the other parties, starting with the party with the second highest percentage of seats in the Parliament.

The allocation of places for the clerical members and administrative members is carried out in the Assembly after the opinion of the Advisory Council has been sought. The political parties put up candidates for those places that fall to them. The election is carried out by a vote for the candidates in the General Assembly.

There are two elections in one legislative period for Deputy Speakers, for Clerical Members and for Administrative Members. The period of duty after the first election is two years, while that after the second election is three years. If, for any reason, one of these positions becomes vacant, then a new election for that post is held. The newly elected member of the Bureau of the Assembly carries on his duties for the time that remains from the incumbent.

If for any reason the position of Speaker becomes vacant, then the eldest Deputy Speaker becomes the Interim Speaker until a new Speaker can be elected. If any of the other places in the Bureau of the Assembly becomes vacant, the duties and authority of the Bureau continue uninterrupted until the vacant places are filled. The vacant places must be filled in the shortest time possible.

A member of the Bureau who severs her ties with her political party or who is a member of a party that has lost its right to form a party automatically loses his position on the Bureau. In such a situation, this member’s place on the Bureau must be filled in the shortest time possible.

In a situation where there is a change in the proportion of the parties in the Parliament, then the party that has undergone the change will have the number of members and places of duties on the Bureau of the Assembly changed accordingly. The authority and responsibility to determine and follow this falls to the Speaker.

The required number of members for the Bureau of the Assembly to meet is an absolute majority. The required number of members for a decision to be taken is an absolute majority of those members present. However, voting on complaints concerning members of the council needs an absolute majority, except for those about whom it has been complained. If the President or a deputy President acting as President is not present, then the Bureau cannot meet nor make decisions.

The Bureau of the Assembly, which carries out the duties given to it in the laws and the Rules of Procedure, comes into play particularly when there is a claim of error in voting or during elections. When
faced by such a situation, the Speaker can open Procedural Talks and if necessary can ask for a vote to correct the situation. If the error is detected after the Session, then the Speaker convenes the Bureau and they decide what should be done. If it is seen that the Speaker is not carrying out his duties, then the views of the Bureau are sought.

Moreover, the Bureau of the Assembly makes regulatory decisions concerning such matters as external affairs, the personal affairs of Members of Parliament and the personnel of the Parliament, what is necessary in order to meet their health and social needs and their security. In addition to this, every member of the Bureau of the Assembly has duties that are enumerated in the statutes that pertain to them.

The Clerical Members are to scrutinize the keeping of minutes and, other than being responsible for those aspects that are inherent in keeping minutes, they are to read documents to the Parliament, take attendance, count the votes, ensure that voting is carried out in a correct and fair manner, and keep track of the order of speaking.

The Administrative Members ensure that administrative, financial, and security matters are executed according to instructions, they direct special ceremonies, present proposals to the Speaker concerned with the budget of the Parliament, and distribute entrance cards to those who are entitled to them. The Administrative Members, whose authority and duties are carried out as part of shared responsibility, remain in Ankara during holidays and breaks.

The candidates for the office of the Speaker of the House, chosen from among the Members of Parliament, must be given to the Bureau of the Assembly within five days of the first session of Parliament. Members of Parliament can nominate themselves, or any other Member of Parliament as a candidate. The head of the political parties cannot make joint decisions. The election of the Speaker must take place within five days after the five-day period for nominations has finished. The Speaker of the House is elected in a secret ballot in the Parliament.
The duties of the Speaker of the House can be summarized as follows: to represent the TBMM outside the Parliament, to direct the sessions of the Parliament, to control the keeping of minutes, to preside over the Bureau of the Assembly and to prepare the agenda of the Bureau, to preside over the Advisory Council, to control the committees of the TBMM, to implement the decisions of the Bureau of the Assembly, to implement and control administrative, financial, and security matters in Parliament, to promote the TBMM and its work and to carry out the duties entrusted to this post by the Constitution, the laws and the Rules of Procedure.

The Speaker, who is second to the President of the Republic in state protocol, represents the President of the Republic when the latter is out of the country. As the Speaker must remain impartial, he/she does not have the right to vote in Parliament.

When the Speaker is unable to be in Parliament, or when they are outside of Ankara at a time when Parliament has convened, then one of the Deputy Speakers will be appointed in writing in the place of the speaker. The duty of the Deputy Speaker is to direct the sessions of the Parliament and to ensure that the records and the summary of the minutes are kept in a proper manner. The Speaker decides which sessions or sittings the Deputy Speaker will direct.

The Advisory Council

The Council is presided over by the Speaker, and is composed of the heads of political parties, the deputy heads, or a Member of Parliament who has been appointed by them in writing. The Rules of Procedure invests the Advisory Council with many duties in many of its articles. On the request of the Speaker, the Council informs the Speaker of its views; the role of these views is merely consultative.

The Advisory Council ensures that there is cooperation between the parties in Parliament and that the working of Parliament proceeds smoothly; if the Speaker deems it necessary or if a leader of a political party group so desires the Speaker calls the Council together in 24 hours. If necessary, a representative of the government or a Deputy Speaker of the Parliament can call such a meeting.

The proposals and suggested decisions of the Advisory Council that are signed by the representatives of the groups are not binding in character and only have the characteristic of proposals; generally the Parliament accepts them without any change.

According to the Rules of Procedure all the requests and views should go through the Advisory Council; if the council cannot meet at the first calling together or cannot produce a decision then the Speaker or the political parties can present their requests directly to the General Assembly.

In general, the suggestions adopted in the Advisory Council are accepted by the General Assembly.
Every political party that is represented in the TBMM forms a “Political Party Group.” In order to form such a group a political party must have at least 20 seats in Parliament. The political party groups allow the Members of Parliament from one party to work together better. Again, the parties that have such an opportunity can bring all their members together once a week and exchange ideas and opinions. Here they can share speeches that they did not make in the Parliament with one another. They make joint decisions and share these with the public.

The political party groups are first established at the beginning of every legislative period when the party prepares procedural rules that they present to the Office of the Speaker; they must also prepare a list that shows the names, surnames and constituency of the members of the group to the Office Speaker. The procedural rules of the parties tend to be the same. According to these, if the head of a party is in the Parliament, then they are the head of the party group; if the head of the party has not been elected to Parliament, then a leader is chosen from among the Members of Parliament who are members of that party.

There are deputy heads in the political party groups; their duty is to act as a whip; that is, to ensure that the Members of Parliament who are members of their party adhere to the party line. The deputy heads are also elected and they act as spokespersons for the group both within and without the Parliament. As well as the heads of the group, there are also group deputy heads, group spokespersons, group general committees, group disciplinary committees and group inspectors that make up the political party groups of the Parliament.

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE POWER

The authority to make laws in Turkey rests with the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM). This authority is not transferable. That is, the matter of drafting laws, no matter what the subject, cannot be handed over to another organ. The TBMM is the only body with the authority to pass, change, or annul laws. The legislative activity of the Parliament must be carried out according to the methods determined in the Constitution and Rules of Procedure.

The people and the administration have to adhere to laws that have been passed by Parliament. The authority to pass laws that was granted to the TBMM in the 1982 Constitution has no limits concerning the subject matter of the law. According to the Constitution “sovereignty” is a right that belongs to the TBMM.

Proposals of Laws

The authority to propose laws belongs to the Cabinet and the Members of Parliament. Any proposals put forward by the Cabinet are called “government bills” (draft laws) while proposals put forward by Members of Parliament are called “private member’s bill” (proposed laws). When discussing both types, for the sake of brevity, they are called “proposals.” While any draft laws must be signed by all the members of the Cabinet, a proposed law does not
have to be supported by all the Members of Parliament. A proposed law must be supported by at least one Member of Parliament, while more than one Member of Parliament can come together to put forward a proposed law.

As well as it being necessary that there is a justification for a proposal, it must also be presented to the Speaker.

In the justification, the proposal must make clear all the information contained in the articles, which rulings are to be annulled or appended and why it is seen as being necessary for them to be annulled, changed, or appended.

**The Role of Committees in Legal Activities**

The Committees are the second address at which proposed laws go to that are presented to the Office of the Speaker of the TBMM (the same is true for legal rulings). There are two types of committees that are involved in examining proposals: these are the Primary Committee and the Secondary Committee. This division means that more than one committee can be interested in any one proposal, depending upon its contents. The duty of the Secondary Committees is to study the proposal in light of the Committee's expertise and to inform the Primary Committee of its views on that matter. The report of the Primary Committee is the one that is debated in the Plenary. The Office of the Speaker of the TBMM decides which committee will look at the proposal and whether it will be a Primary or Secondary Committee. Any proposal that is sent on to the committees will also be published in the General Papers List so that all Members of Parliament will be informed of it.

Except for in exceptional circumstances, committees can start discussions of drafts and proposals sent to them 48 hours after their referral. The agenda of the committee meetings, except in exceptional circumstances, must be sent in writing to the Members of Parliament at least two days in advance. The committees can accept the proposals as they are or change them, or they can combine any other proposals that they see as being related.
The committees must conclude the work on a proposal within 45 days of the referral (for Secondary Committees, this time period is 10 days). Otherwise, the government or the Member(s) of Parliament who made the proposal can ask for the proposal to be put directly on the Agenda of the Parliament. In such cases, the different sides (the committees, the government, the person proposing the bill and a Member of Parliament) may speak in front of the Parliament for a time period not exceeding five minutes. If the Parliament arrives at a decision by voting that the proposal should be put on the agenda then it is put on the agenda.

Committee Reports

The members of the committee that can partake in committee meetings other than Members of Parliament are the Prime Minister, Ministers, and representatives of a bureaucratic or civil social organization that is acting under the authority of the above. Primarily, the committee meetings consider whether the proposal is in keeping with the Constitution. The proposals on the agenda are examined to see if they are suitable to the spirit and contents of the Constitution or not. Everyone who takes part in the committee has the right to speak, but those who are not members cannot suggest a change or vote.

The committee, having completed its discussions on the proposal, presents a report in connection with the matter to the Speaker, with the intention of having the proposal appear on the agenda of the General Assembly. The Office of the Speaker has the report printed and handed out to the Members of Parliament. The thoughts of the committee on the report are included on the proposal, as well as any changes that the committee considers necessary, and the text of acceptance of the committee. The report of the committee is signed by the Members of Parliament who took part in the last meeting concerning the matter. Those members of the committee who abstain or object to the entire report or to certain parts of it can add their views to the report.

A proposal that has been referred to the Plenary is not put on the agenda before 48 hours have elapsed, unless a decision has been taken to the contrary. When it appears on the agenda, the discussions in the Plenary are carried out according to a certain procedure. In connection with this, first all the views on the draft or proposal are put forward. If no decision to the contrary is made, the political party groups, the members of the Primary Committee and the Government can each make a speech lasting no more than 20 minutes, while Members of Parliament can talk for no more than 10 minutes. After these speeches, there is a question-answer session concerning the proposed law or draft law, lasting 20 minutes (10 minutes for questions, 10 for answers). Then the proposed or draft law is put to the vote. If the majority votes against the proposal then it is rejected; if the majority votes in favor, then the articles of the draft or proposed law are examined, one by one. Every article is put to the vote after all the sides have had time to express their opinions. Finally, the draft or proposed law is put, in its entirety, to the vote. A proposal that is not accepted in its entirety by the Plenary has been rejected. If it is accepted, then the proposal becomes law. During the discussions in the Plenary the different sides can put forward motions for changes in the proposal. Thus, it is possible to change an article that has been refused, to change the proposal completely, to return the article to the committee, to add text or a temporary article to the proposal. Every Member of Parliament has the right to make 7 proposals for change, while Members of Parliament who are members of a political party group have the
right to suggest one change. Motions for change can be made to the Office of the Speaker after the committee reports have been published and handed out. For motions that are made after discussions have begun, at least 5 signatures from Members of Parliament are needed. Changes are made according to the motions and the interested parties are informed.

The Speaker, whose role is to direct the debate during the session of Parliament, asks the opinions of the committee and the government about the motions that have been made. The committee and the government can briefly discuss the justification for not including the motion. The person who has put forward the motion is given no more than five minutes to explain the necessity for this motion. The motion is concluded with a vote. A motion that has been accepted by the Parliament but which has not gone past a committee can be called back by the committee that deals with such matters. Even if a motion has been accepted, the committee can write a new text for the motion or request that the text be accepted. The decision of the Plenary is final.

**Ratification by the President**

Every law that is passed by the TBMM is not enacted. For a law to be enacted it must be ratified by the President and published in the Official Gazette. The President examines every law sent to him/her by the Parliament and after examining it to see if it is in keeping with the Constitution, either publishes it in the Official Gazette or does not publish it. The President has 15 days in which to do this. Laws that the President does not see as being fit, either completely or partially, for publication, are sent back to the TBMM with a justification. The President has right of discretion in this matter.

If a law is seen to be partially inappropriate by the President, then the Parliament can only discuss those articles that have been deemed inappropriate. The Parliament has the right of discretion in this matter. If the law is found to be inappropriate in its entirety then the law is discussed in its entirety. If the General Assembly makes a complete or partial change to a law, then the President has the authority to send the law back to the General Assembly once again. If the TBMM passes a law that has been sent back as it was, without change, then the President must publish it in the Official Gazette. If the President so wishes, he/she can apply to the Constitutional Court in this case.

Budget laws fall outside these procedures. The President does not have the authority to send back budget laws to the Parliament. Budget laws must be directly published in the Official Gazette with the ratification of the President.
Constitutional Changes

Constitutional changes are also within the legislative activities of the General Assembly, however changes in the Constitution undergo a different process. Firstly, one-third of the total members of the Parliament, that is 184 Members, must propose any such change. As opposed to the proposal for a normal law, any proposal for a change in the Constitution is discussed twice. It is possible for the proposal to be accepted if 330 Members of Parliament vote for it in a secret ballot.

The President can send a law concerned with changes in the Constitution back to the General Assembly for another discussion. But, after having been sent back, two-thirds of the total number of Members must vote for the proposal; if this is the case then the President informs the public through the Official Gazette or the change is presented as a referendum. A referendum can be held concerning changes in the Constitution. In a referendum a majority of more than half is accepted as a vote in favor of a change.

The Compliance of Laws with the Constitution

Laws, legal rulings, Rules of Procedure of the TBMM, and certain articles and rulings of the above must in form and essence be appropriate to the Constitution. If there is a conflict, then recourse is sought in the Constitutional Court. According to the Constitution, the right to proceed directly to an annulment hearing is given to the President, the Parliamentary party groups of the government and the main opposition party group and at least one-fifths of the total number of Members of Parliament of the TBMM. The time limit to apply for an annulment hearing is 60 days from the publication of the regulation that is to be annulled in the Official Gazette. Moreover, a local court that applies a law in a case can appeal to the Constitutional Court if they think that this law is unconstitutional. The annulment of a law is published in the Official Gazette, and from that date on the law is no longer effective.

THE SUPERVISORY FUNCTION OF THE PARLIAMENT

The Parliament has the authority to supervise the government and does this in ways that are consistent with the parliamentarian system. The means in which this is done are the questions and general views that are expressed concerning the activities of the Parliament.

In order to fulfill this supervisory role, certain methods, such as inquiries, investigations and censure motions are employed. The investigations and inquiries of the Parliament are carried out through committees set up by the Parliament. Censure motions are directed at questioning the carrying out of the responsibilities of the government or any of the ministers, and can lead to the government being brought down or a minister being removed. A proposal for a censure motion can be made in the name of a political party group or with the signature of at least 20 Members of Parliament. It is possible to bring down the government or a minister with the signature of 276 ministers, that is more than half of the full membership.

Parliamentary inquiries are inquiries that are directed at Prime Ministers and Ministers, in or out of office, concerning claims that they acted in contravention of the laws while in office. These questions
are put by Members of Parliament. When the proposal concerning the claim is accepted by the General Assembly, then a committee is set up among the Members of Parliament and a report is prepared, and if necessary, presented to the Parliament. The Inquiry Committee can request information from public and private institutions and if it is seen to be necessary, can confiscate the same. Again, the committee can listen to members of the Cabinet, other interested parties, witnesses, and experts concerning the matter. The decision of the Parliament on the matter is dependent on the committee report.

The decision to send the matter on to the Constitutional Court can only occur with an absolute majority of the all members that has been attained by a secret ballot. If the desired majority is achieved, then the matter is sent to the Constitutional Court. Political party groups cannot hold talks concerning Parliamentary inquiries and they cannot make decisions. The decisions of the Members of Parliament are given freely. The legal regulation concerned in the matter sent to the Constitutional Court must be stated. The Parliament can take the decision to send a President who has been accused of betraying the country, whether they are currently serving or not, to the Constitutional Court.

The Investigative Committees that are set up in the General Assembly with the participation of Members of Parliament have the role of supervising the functions of the TBMM; these committees can only meet over a period that is limited to three months. If this period is not sufficient, then the committee is given another month to complete its work. The members of the investigative committee, the length of time that it will meet, and other similar matters are all suggested by the Speaker and ratified by the Parliament. State secrets and trade secrets cannot be investigated by Parliament. The reports of Parliamentary investigative committees are discussed in Parliament.

Moreover, the General Discussion Sessions that are organized in the Parliament have a supervisory function.

To open a General Discussion Session, a proposal must be given to the Speaker from the government, the political party groups or at least 20 Members of Parliament. The decision to hold a session or not is made in the Plenary.

It is possible to supervise the actions of the government, president or ministers by asking questions that are aimed at gathering
Committee meetings are open to the members of the Council of Ministers

information. Answers can be requested as either written or verbal. The proposals of such questions can be decided on by a deputy himself and are the only way that a Member of Parliament can ask for information from the Minister who is acting in the name of the government concerning the actions of the government. The proposals of questions must be short, cannot contain unjustified or personal views, they cannot contain matters that are concerned with personal or private lives, and they cannot have information appended to them. Every Member of Parliament who prepares a proposal for a question must sign it and present it to the Speaker so that it goes through the necessary process.

Other than the above, the institutions that carry out supervisory roles for the government are the State Economic Enterprises Initiative Committee, established 2.4.1987, according to Law No. 3346, and the Exchequer, established according to the Constitution and one of the largest judiciary organs; these supervise the management, the accounts and functions of the state institutions in the name of the TBMM.

COMMITTEES

The basic function of the committees that are established within the framework of the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the TBMM is to carry out the legislative and supervisory functions of the TBMM. These committees that carry out their roles in the name of the General Assembly of the TBMM not only take on legislative and supervisory roles in their areas of expertise; their investigations and inquiries enlighten the public as well as Members of Parliament. On every committee experts are employed in the area that the committee is investigating. Moreover, there are studies and meeting rooms for every Committee inside the Parliament.

Members of Parliament from the political party groups are included on committees in proportion to the ratio of that party in the General Assembly; the committees are established according to subject and the ministry involved. The members of the committee are selected in an election held in the General Assembly. The political party groups inform the Speaker of Parliament which members will represent them on which committee and these names are put on a list. This list is then voted on in the Parliament. The Members of Parliament chose the committee they wish to be appointed to according to their area of expertise.

The State Economic Enterprises Committee, The Committee on Integration into the European Union, The Human Rights Investigative Committee and the Planning and Budget Committee are different from other committees in that not only are members of the political
party groups included, but also representatives of parties that are not in the Parliament and independent Members of Parliament can be appointed. A political party group can forgo membership on a committee. Those who have been chosen for the Planning and Budget Committee via the Petition Committee cannot be appointed to other committees.

Two elections are held for committees in one legislative period (a legislative period is five years). The period of duty for those chosen in the first election is 2 years, while that of the second is 3 years. A member of a committee chosen in the first election can be re-elected in the second election.

The number of committee members, other than that of the State Economic Enterprises Committee and the Planning and Budget Committee, is suggested by the Advisory Council and the Parliament is then informed of this. The number of members for the State Economic Enterprises Committee, according to Law No. 3346, is 35, and that for the Planning and Budget Committee, according to Article 162 of the Constitution is 40. 25 places of the Planning and Budget Committee are reserved for the party in government.

Those members of committees who have been selected by the Parliament are then called by the Speaker to a meeting to be given their duties. At this meeting, the Head of the Committee, the Deputy Head of the Committee, the Spokesperson and the Secretaries are selected. This is done by a secret ballot.

The Duties of the Committees

There are 17 Permanent Committees in the TBMM, each of which has different duties. In general all are responsible for making a contribution, within their own framework, in bringing about the legislative and supervisory functions of the Parliament. The committees, in general, represent the first stage in the function of the Parliament. The first address where drafts of laws of suggestions or legal ruling decisions are discussed is the committee. The views arrived at in the committees are then sent on to the General Assembly.

The committees can either accept, without any changes, the drafts and proposals that have been sent to them, or change them and then accept them. If they reject the draft or proposal. At the same time they can combine the applications if they think that they are related. The committees cannot make proposals for a law. If the President sees part of a law as being unsuited for publication or if part of a law is sent back by the President to the General Assembly for further discussion, the committee can only discuss those articles that were found to be unsuitable.

Division into Primary and Secondary Committees

The Speaker decides which committee will discuss which drafts, proposals, or legal rulings, it is also decided which committees will be primary and which will be secondary. Referrals to the Primary and Secondary Committees are made at the same time. The Primary Committee is the committee whose views are those that form the basis of the report sent to the General Assembly. The Secondary Committees are given the responsibility of informing the Primary Committees of their views concerning those aspects and articles of the subject that particularly interests them. Secondary Committees must formulate their views in a predefined time period, and must not obstruct the preparation of the report by the Primary Committee.

Committee Meetings

Committee meetings occur when the committee members are called together by the Head of the Committee. This quite often happens at the initiative of the Head of the Committee, but sometimes one third of the Committee Members can put a motion onto the agenda to call a meeting, and then, once again, it is the Head of the Committee who calls the committee together. Except in extraordinary circumstances, there must be at least two days notice given before a meeting, and the agenda must be handed out in writing.

When the Head of the Committee is not present, then the Deputy Head or the Spokesperson takes on the role of the Head. One-third of the Committee Members must be present at the meeting and any decision can only be made with an absolute majority of those members who are present. Participation in the meeting is compulsory. If a member misses three meetings in a row without permission or excuse, or if they do not participate in more than one-third of the meetings in any one year then they can lose their right to membership to the Parliament.

The committee meetings are open to members of the Parliament, the Cabinet, or members of the government, as well as representatives of the government. The Prime Minister or minister concerned with the matter can, with written authority, send a high level public servant to represent them. Moreover, every committee has the authority to call experts on advice.

Not only do committee members partake in the meetings, other Members of Parliament and members of the Cabinet can also participate. The right to speak at the meetings is determined by the Head of the Committee according to the order of requests. This rule does not apply for the Speaker or the representative of the government. If deemed necessary, experts who have been called are given the right to speak by the Head of the Committee. No one who partakes in the committee meeting who is not a committee member, including the government representative, can present a proposal for change or put it to a vote.

If it is seen to be necessary, a meeting of a committee that is discussing a draft or proposal of a law at which a government representative has not been present can be postponed once. As can happen occasionally with the General Assembly, the committee can have a closed sitting. If deemed necessary, a meeting of a committee must request a closed meeting for this to happen. No one but the committee members and the Minister can participate in closed settings.

Communication and Coordination between Committees

A draft, proposal, or any matter that has been sent to the relevant committee by the Office of the Speaker of the Parliament can be forwarded to another committee. A committee that performs such an action must present a justification to the committee to which the matter has been sent. It is also possible that a committee can deem that the input of another committee is necessary on any draft, proposal or any other matter that has been sent to it by the Office of the Speaker.
The Office of the Speaker can also request that a draft, proposal or any other matter be sent to another committee other than the original committee with the intention of learning the view of this committee on this matter. In such circumstances, if there is no problem between the two committees, the requirements of the Speaker are fulfilled and information is provided to the General Assembly. If there is a problem between the two committees then the Speaker puts the matter on the agenda of the General Assembly and acts according to the decision that results from here.

The working of the committee must be concluded on drafts, proposals, or legal rulings within 45 days of the matter being referred to the Primary Committee. If within this time the working of the committee has not concluded, then the government or the person who made the proposal can ask for the matter to be put directly on the Parliamentary agenda.

Work that has been sent to Secondary Committees by the Office of the Speaker must be concluded within 10 days of being referred. It is possible that this period can be shortened. If the secondary committee finds the time to be not enough they can be granted 10 more days at the most.

The committees write directly to all the Ministries. Moreover, information that is necessary for the matters that have been referred to them to be concluded can be requested from the Ministries.

**Committee Reports**

The committees prepare a report for the matters that are connected with their decisions. The report is written by the Head of the Committee or the spokesperson of the committee or a special spokesperson who has been selected for that task. The report contains the committee’s opinions on the matter and explains the justifications for the changes to be made. The reports are signed by the Committee Members at the final meeting and are printed in order to be handed out to Members of Parliament. The Committee Reports that are printed and handed out are added to the minutes of the subsequent first sitting of the General Assembly.

Those members of the committee who abstain or are opposed to the report, either in its entirety or to certain sections of it, have the right to express their opinions openly as an addendum to the report. Those members of the committee who have signed the report do not have the right to speak in a way that contravenes the report of the committee or to ask questions in Parliament. Only those who have been noted down in the report as abstaining or opposing the report have the right to speak.

The committees are represented in the Parliament by the Head of the Committee, the Deputy Head or by a specially appointed spokesperson or persons. At the present time there are 17 specialized committees in the Parliament; this number can change and temporary committees can be established.

**SPECIALIZED COMMITTEES**

1. Justice Committee
2. Constitutional Committee
3. National Defense Committee
4. Home Affairs Committee
5. Foreign Affairs Committee
6. Committee of National Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
7. Committee of Development, Public Works, Communication and Tourism
8. Environmental Committee
9. Committee of Health, Family, Employment and Social Services
10. Committee of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs
11. Committee of Industry, Trade, Energy, Natural Resources, Information and Technology
12. Auditing Committee (for the accounts of the TBMM)
13. Petition Committee
14. Planning and Budget Committee
15. State Economic Enterprises Committee
16. Human Rights Investigative Committee
17. Committee on European Union Integration

Foreign Affairs

The TBMM has a wide parliamentarian diplomatic network that functions within the Office of the Speaker, specialized committees, outreach groups and members of international institutions. In every legislative period there are many outreach groups made up of Members of Parliament in the TBMM. There are close relationships carried out between members of parliaments of friendly countries and members of the TBMM. The aim of the outreach groups is to bring the people of the two countries closer together through the Parliaments and to make a contribution toward solving any problems that might exist between the two countries.

There are many parliamentary organizations in which the TBMM has direct membership. The relationship with these is more at the institutional level. The institutions in which the Parliament has membership and at which Members of Parliament represent the country are as follows:

1. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
2. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly
3. The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Parliamentary Assembly
4. The European Union Joint Parliamentary Commission
5. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
6. The Inter-Parliamentary Association
7. The Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Organization of the Islamic Conference
8. The Association of Asian Parliaments For Peace
9. The Assembly of Western European Unions
The door to Parliament is always open. Every day hundreds, even thousands, of people from all over the country come to the Parliament and share their problems and thoughts with their Member of Parliament and any other relevant parties. Whoever wishes is free to watch the sessions of the General Assembly.

The number of visitors to the Parliament is not one that is often seen elsewhere in the other Parliaments of the world. This situation, in the matter of the legislative functions, from time to time can create some problems but the fact that the people are easily and frequently able to communicate with their Legislative Organ (the TBMM) is a point that eases the functioning of the state.

The physical arrangements of the Parliament make the level of communication between the Members of Parliament and citizens easy to see. For example, there are special sections in which citizens can meet with Members of Parliament. Here, every Member of Parliament has their own study and personnel, including a secretary, have been appointed to serve them. Moreover, there are also advisors who are there to help the Members while the Parliament is in session. Any visitor who comes to see the Members of Parliament is entertained here.

There are a variety of communication channels through which the Parliament can inform the people of Turkey and the world at large of their work. The most effective communication channel for the workings of the General Assembly is the Internet. The voice of the legislative organ is MeclisTV (Parliament TV), where all the developments and information needed on Parliament are provided. The TBMM produces the monthly Parliamentarian Bulletin and other occasional publications in order to inform the public on a number of subjects.

The national press organ, which reports the work of the TBMM through parliamentary reporters, is a continuous service that provides the people with news.

The doors of Parliament are open to those who apply in writing. The majority of applications go to the Petition Committee. All applications are answered with the answer being forwarded to the interested party.
The basic administrative and political duties are carried out by the general administrative organs. The encompassing legislative organ, that is, the TBMM, establishes the executive organs of the Presidency and the Cabinet. The Cabinet is the fundamental executive organ; authority and responsibility are focused here. The Presidency is more geared towards representation. The Cabinet is formed from members of the Parliament in a way that is in keeping with parliamentary traditions. The government is formed with the approval of the President, and the government begins to work with a vote of confidence from the Parliament. The Parliament has bodies that supervise the Cabinet. The President is selected by the Parliament. The TBMM and the executive organs, that is, the Cabinet and the Presidency, are the three important organs that determine the fate of Turkey while working within the framework of parliamentary traditions.

The Relationship between the TBMM and the Government

The government that has been entrusted with running the country establishes a Cabinet. The Cabinet consists of a Prime Minister, and however many vice presidents and ministers the law stipulates. The Prime Minister represents the government and coordinates the members. The government is formed in the Parliament. The President gives the duty of Prime Minister to a Member of Parliament; this person then forms the government. The Prime Minister is at the same time the leader of the party that has a majority in the Parliament (there can be exceptions to this rule), and chooses ministers from among the Members of Parliament from their own party. If the Prime Minister so wishes, they can choose people from outside the Parliament, i.e., people who are not Members of Parliament, to be a Minister.

The appointment of people from within and without the Parliament to the Cabinet that has been selected by the Prime Minister is carried out by the President. The President has the right to object to any of these names. If this happens, then the Prime Minister suggests another name. The Cabinet is presented to the Parliament no later than one week after being approved by the President for a vote of confidence. If the Cabinet does not receive a vote of confidence, then a new government has to be formed. If this situation continues, the task of forming a government can be given to a different leader.

The government is accountable to the TBMM. While the Parliament is the legislative and supervisory organ, the government forms the executive organ. The executive and the legislative must be separated for there to be a separation and balance of power. The party that forms the government in the Parliament takes on a greater role in executive activities.

Election of the President

The President of the Republic, who represents the Republic and the nation, is the Head of State. The President of the Republic is chosen by the General Assembly. Any person who is a citizen of the Republic of Turkey and is over 40 and has finished higher education can be elected to be the President of the Republic. In previous Constitutions, it was a precondition that the President of the Republic had to be a member of the Parliament. In the Constitution of 1982 a new regulation was introduced, allowing the President to be elected from outside the TBMM. In such cases, the candidate must be proposed to be chosen, in writing, by at least one-fifth of the Members of Parliament.

The Duties of the President

The President is neutral; the President is above party politics and must show all citizens equal interest, no matter what their view. The Constitution has introduced some regulations in order to ensure the neutrality of the President: the period of service for the President is longer than that of a Member of Parliament (seven years), the same person cannot be chosen as the President more than once, the person who is chosen as the President must sever his ties with his party (if he has one), and if he is a Member of Parliament, he must resign from this post.

The duties of the President are as follows: to represent the State both domestically and abroad, to approve the laws accepted by the General Assembly or to return the laws in order for them to be reviewed, present constitutional changes in the law to the public for referendum, start proceedings in annulment cases in the Constitutional Court, appoint certain high level officials or sign the written decision appointing the same, appoint the members of higher judiciary organs, to sign decisions of the Cabinet according to the Rules of Procedure and to publish the same, to announce extraordinary conditions and martial law or to head the Cabinet at such times, to lighten the punishment of prisoners who are ill or suffering similar circumstances, or to completely pardon the same, to approve international treaties and to broadcast the same.

Responsibilities of the President of the Republic

The President is the unaccountable part of the executive power. Therefore, the President is not accountable for carrying out the duties of the office. Although some actions of the government become validated because the President signs them, the President is not accountable for such actions. The one who is accountable for those actions that have been signed by the President is the head of the government and the relevant Members of Parliament. As a role, the Prime Ministers and all the ministers who play a role in the process carried out by the President's Office take part in the functions...
carried out by this office. The actual accountability for any decisions carrying the signature of the President belongs to the Prime Minister and the Ministers.

Just as many of the actions of the Government can be put into execution with the signature of the President, so too are many of the duties of the President realized by the participation of the government or the responsible Minister. Other than this, the President has the authority to carry out functions on his/her own in many subjects. For example, the President is able to appoint certain high-level bureaucrats, to appoint members to the high courts, to select the presidents of universities, to appoint the head of the General Staff...The functions that the President carries out by him/herself are not open to question.

The President is not politically accountable. The person/persons accountable for any action carried out by the President is the Prime Minister or Minister who has signed that action. The President cannot be punished for any action or function that he/she carries out. The only exception to this is the crime of treachery to the country. The President can only be accused of this crime with a proposal signed by at least one-third of the total members of the TBMM and the decision must be made by at least three-fourths of the total number of members. Any President who has been accused in this manner will be tried in the High Court. The President is accountable for any crimes that are outside the scope of his/her duties.

The Election of the President

When one talks about executive power in Turkey the Prime Minister and the Cabinet spring to mind. The Prime Minister is appointed by the President from among the members of the TBMM. The Prime Minister is generally the head of the party with the most Members of Parliament. The Presidents in interim periods can use their discretion and appoint as Prime Minister leaders of small parties in order to form a government.

The government is formed with the appointment of the Prime Minister by the President. The Prime Minister appoints Members of Parliament to form the government, that is, the ministers; these names are approved by the President. The Constitutions of 1961 and 1982 allow for ministers to be appointed from outside the TBMM. The government must present their program to the General Assembly no later than one week after the Cabinet has been formed and present it for a vote of confidence. If the government receives a vote of confidence from the General Assembly then it can start governing the country.

The Duties of the Prime Minister

The Prime Minister heads up the Cabinet. The duty of the Prime Minister is to ensure cooperation among the ministers and to observe the execution of the general policies of the government. On paper, there is no hierarchical relationship between the Prime Minister and the ministers. But this situation is not reflected in practice. In practice, the entire burden of the government is on the Prime Minister and this load is shared out by the Prime Ministry to the ministries. This means that the Prime Minister is in a position that is clearly and effectively above that of the Ministers.

The President can dismiss any Minister on the suggestion of the Prime Minister.

Inside the Prime Ministerial organizations the Prime Minister has the highest position and after him/her come the under-secretaries of the Prime Minister. Their duty, in short, is to help the Prime Minister. The under-secretaries of the Prime Minister play a very important role both within the Prime Ministerial organizations and in the running of the Cabinet.
The Cabinet

The administrative organ of the Prime Minister and the ministers is called the Cabinet. Important matters of state are bound to the decisions of the Cabinet. The Cabinet produces Rules of Procedure and also appoints some civil servants. Moreover, any subject, which does not have to be administrative in nature, that is sent by the Prime Minister to the Cabinet will be examined and discussed.

In normal circumstances, the Cabinet is headed up by the Prime Minister or the representative of the Prime Minister. When it is seen to be necessary the President can act as the Head of the Cabinet as well. The Cabinet makes decisions by taking a vote. Decisions on which all the signatures of the Cabinet are not found cannot be sent to the President for ratification.

Ministers

Public services that are involved in carrying out general administrative duties are provided by the Ministers. Every ministry of the Cabinet is headed up by a Minister. Any services that do not fall under a ministerial organization will be dealt with by the state ministers. The state ministers and their number are determined by legal regulations.

The role of state minister is political rather than administrative. Ministers help the Prime Minister to run the government. Another way of describing a minister is that a Minister attached to a ministry has both an administrative role and a political role. The Minister acts as an administrator in that they direct, represent the ministry, manage and control their ministry, they sign the budgets created there, etc.

If a Minister has permission or a valid excuse he can appoint another Minister to represent him, however a Minister cannot represent more than one Minister at a time. Being appointed as a representative is also possible with the approval of the President. A Minister who is sent to the High Court according to a decision of the Parliament loses his post. If the Prime Minister is sent to the High Court, then it is considered that the government has resigned. Any ministerial post that is empty must be filled in no more than 15 days.
History of the Library

As with the first attempts at a Parliament in Turkey, the first attempts at opening a parliamentarian library stretches back to Ottoman times. The works and documents of the Second Ottoman Parliament Library, from 1908-1920, can be found in today’s Library of the Parliament. The Ottoman Parliament was bi-cameral, with a Meclis-i Ayan and a Meclis-i Mebusan. Therefore, these two houses had libraries that were separate from one another. With the first renovation made in 1916, a serious step was taken in the Library of the Parliament. In the regulation of the Rules of Procedure of the Meclis-i Mebusan, the library was under the jurisdiction of a special commission that was connected to the administrative body.

One of the services that the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), which opened on 23 April 1920, carried out was to officially establish the Library of the Parliament. The leader of this undertaking was the Member of Parliament from Aydin, Dr. Mazhar (Germén). The proposal of Mazhar Bey which concerned the establishment of the library and the payment of the budget necessary for this, was accepted on 28 September 1920. With the establishment of a five-person “Library Committee,” the TBMM library was officially established. The 5,000 volumes of books belonging to the library of the Ottoman period, as well as newspapers, magazines, and minutes were all sent to the library.

The Location of Today’s Library

The Parliamentary building that began its official life on 21 December 1960 differs from the previous two Parliamentary buildings in that it was planned and designed as a Parliamentary building. This allowed for the library, like every other service area, to be made according to an appropriate design. This opportunity did not occur with the two previous buildings. The building of the Parliamentary Library of today provides services in a space that was designed as a library. The library, which is nearly half a century old, sees an increase of between 6-7 thousand volumes every year. This means that there is a need for an additional or a new building.

Use of the Space

The library, which occupies the east wing of the main Parliament building, consists of nearly 2,550 square meters of functional space. There are reading rooms on both sides of the entrance hall, where domestic and foreign periodicals can be found. The administrative offices and some technical sections can be found on the same hallway. The Large Reading Room is located at the end of the entrance hall. The library’s collection of books, newspapers and magazines are stored in the four-storied depot under this reading room. There are more than eight kilometers of shelving here.

The lower floor, which can be reached by going through the door that opens onto the entrance hall and down the stairs, contains the catalogue, minutes, newspapers, magazines and microfilms. Moreover, there is a reading room in the Public Relations Building that serves the assistants of the Members of Parliament. Here the daily newspapers and some weekly magazines can be found, and it is possible to photocopy these here if necessary.
Grand Reading Room

The Grand Reading Room forms the center of the library. The walls of this room are covered by special shelving on which thousands of volumes can be found. The center of the room is quite spacious and has been equipped with individual desks or group desks. General reference works are located here and the special lighting allows readers to work in a comfortable atmosphere. The staff of the Information Section, located in the Grand Reading Room, are able to offer effective assistance to readers as well as helping them to find the information that they need.

Who Can Benefit and How?

The library, established as part of the structure of the Parliament and designed to provide services for those working in the Parliament, is used, first and foremost, by the Members of Parliament. All the information and documents that the Members of Parliament may require in their legislative and supervisory work can be provided by the library.

Those who require information can write, telephone or apply in person to the library. The staff of the Readers Section will help readers to find information in their areas of expertise, and if necessary can direct them to the relevant units. Among the services provided by the library are information profiles and the preparation of reports in a number of fields, according to the wishes of the reader. These services are carried out by expert personnel in law, economy, public administration, international relations, political science and other fields.

It is possible to study old newspapers on the microfilms and if necessary a printed copy can be provided. Those who want copies can only find this in the microfilm collection; this has been done in order to prevent damage to the originals. From 1998 on, selected items and articles from all Turkish newspapers, except for local papers, have been made available in an electronic environment. The service for reaching the newspaper database is only available through the intranet.

Users from outside the Parliament

Individuals other than Members of Parliament and the personnel of the Parliament can also benefit from the library. In order to use the library, the source that is being searched should not be present in another library and permission is needed from the Library Board. Members of the public can use the library for 15 days. This period can be extended. Members of the public can enter the library and use the resources there; but they cannot take sources out of the library.

Working Hours

The library is open during the week from 9:30 - 18:30. While the General Assembly is sitting, the hours are extended. The library is open from 10:00 - 16:00 on weekends that do not coincide with the holiday or breaks of the Parliament, or national or religious holidays. At these times the service
provided is limited to the newspaper and magazine rooms where the periodical publications are held.

Sources

Domestic and foreign publications are kept track of in a systematic manner, and the rich resources available in the library are continuously added to. The library is particularly well stocked in resources concerned with public administration, law, economy, political science, philosophy, sociology, local administration, international relations, history, geography and parliamentarian subjects. These resources are not just limited to works in Turkish; there are many works in foreign languages.

Within the limits of the Collection Law, the library can have a copy of any publication published in Turkey free of charge. At present there are 300,000 volumes of books in Turkish and foreign languages that have been put on computers in the MARC (Machine-Readable Catalogue) format.
Every year between 5,000 and 6,000 works in Turkish are added to the library’s collection, with between 1,000 and 2,000 works in foreign languages being added as well. If a work that is not in the collection is requested by a Member of Parliament, it can be attained after a request form has been filled in, and has been approved by the Library Board.

**Documentation Services**

Library services and documentation and research services are carried out in a complimentary manner in the Parliamentary Library. Within the documentation services, newspapers and magazines are analyzed along with the minutes of the TBMM and entered on computers. The periodical collection of nearly 55,000 volumes of Turkish and foreign-language newspapers and magazines is one of the richest in Turkey.

Again, in this scope, there are a variety of databases that are prepared and updated on the internet. The databases, in which subjects like government programmes, the opening speeches to the Parliament by the Presidents of Turkish Republic and political parties, are presented for use on the web pages of the Parliament.

**Research Services**

The Research Section of the Library, established in order to meet the need for aggregated information in 1982, meets the needs of the Parliament in its legislative and executive functions.

In this unit, areas like law, economy, international relations, political science and public administration are focused on and experts with knowledge of foreign languages are employed. Here, information profiles and reports are prepared according to requests from Members of Parliament or subjects that are important on the national or international agenda.
THE BUILDINGS OF THE TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
From the first day of the Turkish Grand National Assembly until today the TBMM has met in three different buildings. The history of the First Parliamentary building stretches back to 1915; the architect of this building was the Military Architect of the Army Corps, Hasip Bey, who died during the War of Independence. This building was used from the first sitting of the Parliament until 18 October 1924. The First Parliamentary building was constructed of stone and is accepted as one of the earliest examples of the First Period of National Architecture in Ankara.

When the First Parliamentary building could no longer meet its needs, the Parliament moved to the Second Parliamentary building, which measured nearly 200 meters. The building, designed by the architect Vedat Bey, had previously been being used as the headquarters for the Halk Fırkası (People’s Party). This building served the Turkish Grand National Assembly until 1961.

The decision to construct the current Parliamentary building, which came into being in a manner different from the first two, being designed from the very beginning as a building that would house the Parliament, was made at the time of Atatürk. The construction of the building, designed by the Australian architect, Professor Dr. Clemens Holzmeister, began on 26 October 1939. This building, built in order to meet the needs of the TBMM, was opened on 6 January 1961. From that date until today the TBMM has carried out its activities in this building.

**FIRST PARLIAMENTARY BUILDING**

The First Parliamentary building dates back to 1915. This building was built on the order of the political figure Enver Pasha during the Ottoman period and was begun in 1915. The architect was Military Architect of the Army Corps, Hasip Bey, who died during the War of Independence. (There is no detailed information concerning Hasip Bey.)

It was intended that the building, a result of construction that was carried out under the patronage of the Ankara representative of the Union and Progress Party (Ittihat ve Terakki Fırkası), Memduh Şevket (Esenal), was to be used as the Numune School or the Party’s Club.

At that time, Ankara was just an ordinary Anatolian town and there were not many possibilities for fulfilling the needs made by
construction work. In order to meet the demand for materials to be used in the construction, a workshop was set up near Akköprü to produce briquette, floor mosaic and clay water pipes. But, despite all this effort, the construction was not finished.

Although unfinished, this building was still one of the most important stone buildings in Ankara at that time. The other stone buildings that were present at this time in Ankara were the Abidin Pasha Mansion, on the outskirts of Cebeci, and in the city square the Teachers’ School, Taşhan, the Ankara School of Agriculture, the Government building and the Sultan’s School. Almost all of these buildings have been preserved up until today.

**Lack of a Parliamentary Building**

After World War I, the situation in Ankara was much the same as that in the rest of Anatolia. English and French soldiers had been sent to Ankara and had begun to wait. The stone building that had been begun in 1915 was used by the French army as their headquarters. Moreover, some parts of the building had not yet been finished, and the roof was not yet completed.

In 1919, with the positioning of the 24th Division, under the command of Ali Fuat Pasha, on the ridges of Sarıkışla and Etilik, the English abandoned Ankara and withdrew to İzmit. The French division was forced to abandon Ankara on 27 December 1919 with the arrival of Mustafa Kemal Pasha to the city.

**Opening of the Parliament**

The decision to establish a new Parliament was made just before the decision to abolish the Meclis-i Mebusan (the Parliament at that time) was taken. This was announced to all on 19 March 1920 in a communique published by Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

After the elections it was time for the new Members of Parliament to gather for an opening of Parliament; but there was the problem of where to meet. After evaluating the existing possibilities, the decision was made to use Hasip Bey’s as yet unfinished building. The responsibility for repairing and completing this building was given to the Member of Parliament, Necati Bey from Bursa, who had been the representative of the Union and Progress Party at one time. The people of Ankara all helped Necati Bey. The desks to be used came from the Teachers’ School, the table and chairs came from the official offices, the gas lamps to use in the hall came from cafes, and it was in this way that the Parliament was able to fulfill all its requirements.

A carpenter was given the task of carrying out all the woodwork in the meeting hall, including the Speaker’s Podium. The carpenter refused to take any payment for the work, saying, “I cannot accept money for such a noble task. Let this be my present to the nation.” With these words he expressed the feelings of the nation.

The Turkish Grand National Assembly first convened in this building on 23 April 1920, with the participation of thousands of people. The decision taken to embark on the War of Independence resulted in victory and the foundations of the Turkish Republic were laid here.
Architectural Characteristics

The most important reason for choosing this building at that time, with conditions as they were in Ankara, was due to the architectural characteristics of the building. The First Parliament building measured 22x43 meters, it was a single-story building, constructed on top of a basement, with one large meeting room and 9 rooms, and was made of stone. The building has all the characteristics of the period, with double or triple pointed Classic Ottoman arches and wooden props supporting wide eaves. There were two balconies on the front side, giving the building depth and emphasizing the symmetry. The dome held an important place in architecture of that date, yet, due to the location of the building, a dome was not used. The local Ankara stone (andesite) was used to cover the exterior.

The Parliamentary Building in Ankara, one of the first examples of the first National Architectural period, in contrast to its impressive front, had a fairly plain and simple interior design. The placing of different sized rooms on both sides of one corridor was repeated in a similar way in other structures of the period that served different functions.

It is striking that the podium and desks of the Members of Parliament are positioned to take up minimum space in the hall where meetings were held. The thing that first strikes the eye in this hall is the inscription. “Sovereignty is of the People,” which hangs behind the Speaker’s Podium. Written in talik calligraphy, this inscription is signed by Hulusi.

The Building Today

With the move of the TBMM to the new building on 18 October 1924, the First Parliamentary Building was used for a time by the Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Firkasi). Later, this building hosted the Ankara Law School, and was handed over to the Ministry of Education by the Minister’s Commission in a decision dated 15 June 1952. In a decision taken by the Ministry of Education Commission on 1 March 1957, the building was turned into the First Grand National Assembly Museum, and opened its doors to the public on 23 April 1961.

As a result of the restoration work and the exhibitions that were held in it the museum had its name changed to the “War of Independence Museum” and once again opened to the public.
THE SECOND PARLIAMENTARY BUILDING

The Need for a New Building

From the very first day, the First Parliamentary building was a far from fulfilling all the needs of the parliament. The situation was so bad that committees had to take turns to use the same rooms to have meetings in. As time progressed, some committees began to rent space outside the building in which to hold their meetings. But, at the beginning, as there was no other alternative, all the Members of Parliament were willing to put up with these hardships.

With time, the need for a new parliamentary building began to be seen as a matter of urgency. After talks in the TBMM a majority accepted the view that a new building needed to be constructed. But the debates continued to go on. With the continuation of the debate and holdup in the work, instead of constructing a new parliamentary building from scratch, the idea of using existing buildings began to be contemplated. The first building to come to mind was that of the Meeting Hall of the People's Party (Halk Fikríası) that was located immediately next to the existing building. It was renovated to meet the needs of the Parliament.

This building, designed for the Republican People's Party in 1923 by the architect Vedat Bey, was opened on 18 October 1924 after a number of renovations and additions to turn it into the new building of the Parliament. In this way, the Second Parliament Building was, like the first, a building that had been designed for other purposes, and after a series of alterations was put into the service of the TBMM.

The Architect, Vedat Bey

Vedat Bey (Tek), one of the leading architects of the First Period of National Architecture, started his education at Galatasaray Highschool, and then continued to pursue it in Paris. First he finished
the Ecole Monge and later went on to study art at the Académie Julien and took engineering classes at the Ecole Centrale. He created his first works while he was in Istanbul.

He carried out work in Istanbul at the same time as doing work in Ankara during the early years of the Republic, making additions to the Ankara Gazi Mansion and designing the first projects for the Ankara Palas Hotel. Vedat Bey was involved in many projects, in either the design stage or the implementations, for public buildings. Among these are the Main Post Office in Sirkeci (1909), additions to Dolmabahçe Palace, the Haydarpaşa ferryboat quay, the Moda ferryboat quay, the Karaköy Deniz Yolları Acentası (Seaways Agency, which has been pulled down), Karaköy Deniz Turkish baths (again, these have been pulled down), the Kastamonu Government House (1901-1902), the Hungarian Consulate in Nişantaşı, and Veliefendi Hippodrome and Arms Museums (the last two were not built).

Vedat Bey taught at the Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Alisi (Fine Arts Academy) and Mühendis Mekteb-i Alisi (Engineering School), striving to help educate students who would reflect the national consciousness in their works. Vedat Bey passed away in 1942.

The Architectural Characteristics of the Building

This building, shaped by the principles of National Architecture in the framework of the shortage of materials of this period, is built from rough quarter-stones, and consists of two floors built upon a
basement. The building is rectangular in shape, with the entrance facing the avenue on one of the shorter sides. After entering the building there is a long passageway, with stairs on both ends. In the middle is a meeting hall that is two-stories high; the entrance to the building was found to be too plain, so in 1925 the architect Kemalettin Bey added an architrave.

The entrance, the long side that faces the station, and the windows on the upper floor of the symmetrically designed Second Parliamentary building are either pointed or squat, surrounded by a brick arch. The windows on the ground floor are rectangular and again have a brick arch surrounding them that is slightly depressed, with the interiors of this band resembling turquoise-navy tiles.

The Building Today

The meetings of the TBMM continued in this building, measuring approximately 200 m² until 27 May 1960. The Constituent Assembly, when preparing the 1961 Constitution, assigned this building to be used for the meetings of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). It was later handed over to the Culture and Tourism Ministry to be used as a museum and offices. Today it is open to the public as the Republican Museum.

Kemalettin Bey’s depressed bands of cut andesite stone, the crested door frames and the white marble arches have a palm motif placed at the top on the façade. In the interior, the ceilings are covered with cloth that has been decorated with classic Ottoman motifs, while one section of the walls of the meeting hall and the ceiling have been covered with wood paneling. Despite the inspiration from historical Ottoman architecture in the decorations of the building, the walls constructed of large rocks prevents it from being showy, rather giving it the air of a humble provincial building. The garden and ponds in the back of the building give it a pleasant air.
THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDING OF TODAY

The Turkish Grand National Assembly has been housed in three different Parliamentary buildings from its inception until today. The building used today differs from the other two in that it was designed as a building for the Parliament, and the decision to construct it was taken during the time of Atatürk in 1937. The construction of the building began in 1939, but took many years to finish, finally being completed in 1961 when it began to be used as the official building to house the TBMM.

The Architect of the Building

The architect of the Parliament Building was the Austrian, Prof. Dr. Clemens Holzmeister. Holzmeister first came to Turkey in 1927 to construct the building for the Ministry of Defense. Holzmeister also designed many state buildings, such as that for General Staff headquarters, the Presidential Palace, and the Supreme Court. For a while, Holzmeister was also a member of the teaching staff at the Istanbul Technical University, Architectural Faculty, where he helped to train many Turkish architects.
Holzmeister, who had struggled for the independence of Austria with the support of the government was removed from his post, and like many other Europeans spent the crisis years of World War II in Turkey.

The prominent characteristic of Holzmeister's works, which the conditions of Turkey at that time must have influenced to some extent, was their simplicity. Again, the movement in architecture toward regional architectural at that time is reflected in his work as a determining characteristic. In the works of Holzmeister, an eclectic style was used, starting from two characteristics, one to emphasize more clearly the gravity of the state, and two, simplicity, as the Turkish Republic had only just embarked on this road. This architectural style is found in other buildings of that period, besides those of Holzmeister.

Development Activities in Ankara

On 13 October 1923, three years after the opening of the TBMM and 2 weeks before the proclamation of the Republic, it was announced that Ankara was to be the new capital. During the first years there was intense architectural and city planning activities. Before the Parliament was opened, Ankara was an ordinary Anatolian town, with a population of 40,000; from April 1920 onwards it underwent a physical as well as spiritual change. The task to make Ankara into a city worthy of a capital was given to Herman Jansen, called for this purpose from Europe.

Holzmeister, like Jansen, who had also come from Europe, played an important role in determining the architectural style of the period. Every building finished in time helped to rivet the existence of Ankara as the capital and the final work of that architectural period, today's Parliament Building, was at the very pinnacle of this.

The Decision to Construct the Building

On 11 January 1937, when the construction of a second building was being discussed after the First Parliament Building could no longer meet the needs of the Parliament, a law was passed in which it was declared that the design for the new parliamentary building would be decided as the result of a national competition. The law stated clearly that the building to be constructed should have characteristics that complement the Turkish Republic.
The workers, who began construction work again on 29 July 1942, shared out the work between different types of working groups. In connection with this, the masonry, carpentry, metal work and plumbing were all assigned to different contractors. It was decided to employ Swiss workers to carry out some of the plumbing work, as this was not possible to do at that time in Turkey; the first panel heating and ventilation system in Turkey was contracted out to English workers. At this time, one of Holzmeister’s students, Ziya Payzin, was given the task of creating the detailed drawings of the building.

Finally in 1947 the main structure of the Parliament Building was finished. In the same year, the management of the construction was handed over from the Parliament to the Public Works Ministry. In 1948 Ziya Payzin became the representative for Holzmeister and from that date he oversaw the construction work himself.

**Disagreement on Construction and a New Search**

From 1950 onwards there were many different political parties in Turkey; discussion ensued concerning the unfinished Parliament Building and the idea that further investment in the construction of the building was unnecessary became more prevalent. After the elections in 1950 a 30-person committee, made up of Members of Parliament, began to conduct an investigation that looked into the construction and the different arguments involved.

The architect Ziya Payzin contributed a suggestion to the discussion. Payzin suggested that although the transformation of the building into a hospital or university was suitable, such a decision would only increase expenses. Seeing that the structure was larger than necessary, it was suggested that the Prime Minister’s Office, the Presidency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be relocated within the structure. Thus, a great economy would be made.

The Speaker of the period, Refik Koraltan adopted this decision with the provision that no great changes were to be made and that the building could later return to its original form. With the approval of a thirty-person committee of Members of Parliament, the not-yet built Prime Minister’s Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs buildings were abandoned, and the decision was made to continue the construction of the Parliament Building so that it would include these.

Despite all this, the government, which was undergoing a currency crisis, continued to see the construction of the Parliament Building as a poor investment. Starting with the imported heating system, all the materials that had to be brought from abroad were causing great problems.

**The First Occupants**

While the building was still under construction, the first block to be finished was what is today known as the Battalion of the Guards. Here the American Aid Committee was located. The block that was finished later and today used for printing and health services was allocated to the Middle East Technical University.
The fact that the Baghdad Pact Minister’s Council was to be held in Ankara in December of 1957 was a watershed for the Parliament Building, where now work was carried out at full speed. The fact that the meetings held in the parliaments of other countries had all been extremely impressive meant that Turkey could not lag behind in providing a suitable setting for the meeting here. The authorities were very worried that an appropriate site for this meeting would not be able to be found in Ankara. The Parliamentary Building of the time did not have the capacity to fulfill that role.

The Foreign Ministry, finding themselves in a difficult position, suggested using the Parliamentary Building that was still under construction at that time. According to their suggestion, the section which had had the outer structure and roof finished could, if necessary, be brought up to the necessary condition or added on to; in other words, that section could be made ready for the meeting. There were about five months, and about 1.5 million lira and $300,000 had been allocated; it would be possible to create the necessary setting for the meeting.

With the presentation of this proposal to the Prime Minister of the time, Adnan Menderes, all the necessary tasks were completed, including the currency transfer. The goods that had been contemplated for the site for the meeting were simplified and with the heating system brought from Switzerland, the problem of heating was overcome. The crews worked round the clock, with the result that the site was ready for the meeting and the CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) meeting was held there.

After the conference, the speed of construction increased and the finished sections were handed over to the administrative organizations as they were needed. These were: The Prime Minister’s Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Works Controller’s Office, the Secretariat of CENTO and The Commission for Distribution and Appropriation.

**The Official Opening of the Parliamentary Building**

The new Parliament Building, which was finished in 1960, was officially opened on 6 January 1961 with the First Assembly. As all the sections of the new building had been
allocated for the Parliament, the former Parliament buildings began to be used as museums. The work of the Turkish Great National Assembly began to be carried out from this building, a building that from its very conception was a home for the Parliament, in 1961.

The building was built to house to the bicameral system that was in place at the time of its opening; in 1982 the building was reorganized according to the current parliamentary system. From 1961 to 1982 there were two separate houses in the TBMM (the elected Members of Parliament and the partially elected and partially appointed senators).

With the change over to a single house in 1982, the building was adapted to suit this system.

**The Architecture of the Building and the Characteristics of its Structure**

The Parliamentary Building has characteristics and a general structure that symbolize the power of the Turkish Republic: it was designed with qualities that reflect the gravity, solidity and strength of the nation. All the components of the building were approached with the aim of making them monumental, balanced and three-dimensional.

The area that the Parliamentary building covers measures 19,372 m². The building consists of four stories above the basement level, with the total area of these floors being 56,775 m². The façade of the four-story building measures 248 m². The building was made with a reinforced concrete carcass. The thickness of the outer walls measures between 8 cm and 24 cm and one-third of the walls is covered with white travertine, partially hand crafted and partially designed by machine. The group of structures is organized in monumental dimensions, with the highest point, the stairs that lead to the grand meeting hall and the columned entrance, being in the middle. The main body has wings that go in two parallel lines and these are connected by a bridge.

From these galleries one can enter the 550-seat National Assembly Meeting Hall (General Assembly) in the middle. The General Assembly Hall has a visitor’s balcony encircling it. From here one can go through the wings that are off to the right of the Hall of Honor into the second large meeting hall, which was previously used as the Senator’s Hall. Once again, there are two more separate halls, which are used by the different parties.

The Ceremonial Hall is a three-story structure in the front left wing. There is a gallery at the top of the Hall that lets in light. The top floor of this section is connected to the main structure by a bridge. Under the Ceremonial Hall there is a lower entrance hall that is
covered with marble. This area is used for various exhibitions and cocktail parties. There is another bridge, continuing the symmetry of the structure, stretching to the right from here. In this section, which consists of two floors, the Office of the Speaker is on the ground floor; the upper floor consists of the rooms used by the members of the Council of State. There are columns that reach up two stories toward the Ministerial Buildings.

Other than the General Assembly Room of the Parliamentary building, there are three large meeting rooms for the political parties, having a capacity of 176, 415 and 700 persons, as well as 44 halls and 352 rooms, both large and small. Moreover, there are administrative offices set aside for the political parties, meeting rooms for commissions, parliamentary Library, Parliamentary TV, information management center, archives, press offices, shoe-shining parlor, Post Office (PTT), plane and train ticket sales offices, the General Secretariat and some service offices.

Moreover, in the main building there are 16 elevators, 9 being for passengers, the remaining for goods. The building is lit by 695 crystal chandeliers and 605 special wall-mounted lighting fixtures. The heating was designed to use lignite coal from a central boiler system is being installed. The heating was designed in such a way as to bring the air pollution that it created down to a minimum. At the present time, the Parliament is heated by natural gas and a new heating system is being installed.

**Goods Used and the Symbolic Importance**

Despite the shortages of the period when it was built, the architectural style and the monumental intention of the TBMM building demanded grand dimensions, high columns and windows, structural components that gave a three-dimensional impression, interior gardens and settings that were all perfectly suited to the ideals of the Turkish style and the monumental intention of the TBMM building demanded grand dimensions, high columns and windows, structural components that reminded one of a Republic and that worked as monumental representation of all this. The exterior of the building has been built without conditions. belongs to the Republic and that worked as monumental representation of all this. The symbolic importance of this is enormous and the inscription found in the National General Assembly Hall. “Sovereignty, without restrictions, belongs to the people” sums this up.

**The Symbolic Significance of the Location of the Parliament Building**

The location of the Parliament Building was chosen with care. In the 1928 plan of Prof. Dr. Herman Jansen, the winner of the Ankara City-Development Plan Competition, arranged according to the directive of Atatürk, the Ministry Complex is located in a triangle that is between today’s Atatürk Boulevard and Dikmen Avenue.

The ministerial buildings that begin at the Güven Memorial carry down to the Ministerial Complex (in the Devlet Neighborhood) and end at the highest point, which is the Turkish Grand National Assembly Building that represents the nation. The symbolic significance of this is enormous and the inscription found in the National General Assembly Hall, “Sovereignty, without restrictions, without conditions, belongs to the people” sums this up.
The Geographical Location and Layout of the Parliamentary Building

The Parliament Building, which occupies the final and highest point on the way from the Ministerial Complex toward Çankaya, dominates the city. The TBMM building covers an area that is one of the largest in the world. It is bordered on the north by İnönü Boulevard, on the south by Ömür Street, to the west by Dikmen Avenue, to the east by Atatürk Boulevard and Güvenlik Avenue.

The location in which the building is found is occupied by the Parliament building to the north, while to the east is the National Sovereignty Park (Milli Eşcumun Park), to the west the Reception Hall (1,325 m²) are placed. To the south of the Parliament Building is the Public Relations Building and the mosque, while to the east is located the Battalion of the Guards (7,616 m²) and a covered car park (16,544 m²), while to the west are located the Personnel Building (8,222 m²), the heating plant, the Printers Building (2,221 m²), and the water depot (1,296 m²). Along Güvenlik Avenue are found the residences of TBMM employees, the residences of the employees of the Battalion of the Guards, a casino and greenhouses in which plants from the south can be found and recreation areas. The entrances to the Parliamentary complex are from the Dikmen Gate to the west (off Dikmen Avenue), from the east from the Çankaya Gate (off Atatürk Boulevard), providing two separate entrances. The entrance to the north off İnönü Boulevard is not use accept during ceremonial occasions. The employee residences can be entered from Güvenlik Avenue.

The Latest Improvements in the General Assembly Hall

In the last few years, the greatest changes in the Parliament Building have occurred in the General Assembly Hall. On a decision taken in 1995 by the Council of Ministers it was decided to hold a competition for a national project to redesign the General Assembly Hall. The contest was held within the guidelines of the Architect's Guild and the Architecture-Engineering-City and Town Planners Project Directorate; the project prepared by Ural Mimariş Şehircilik Limited Şirketi (Ural Architectural-City Planning Co. Ltd) was chosen as the winner by the jury. The project redesigned the way the Members of Parliament were to sit, placing the seats in the style of an amphitheater, and improving the visual and audio communication, and giving a more modern interior design.

This latest reorganization allows all members of Parliament to sit in the General Assembly Hall; there are 25 seats on both sides for the government and committees. There are 75 boxes for protocol, 75 for foreign representatives, 80 boxes for members of the press, and places for 725 people in the special auditors gallery. The General Assembly Hall was opened for use in 1998.

The Arrangement of the Parliamentary Building Gardens

The first project for the landscape garden chose the design worthy of fine recognition by the system and to take part in electronic votes. Also on the desks are microphones that enable them to speak from their seats. The General Assembly Hall, which was completely renewed, contains 16 large chandeliers that are in their original state representing the 16 independent Turkic States.

The design of the General Assembly Hall was designed as a graduated level garden with a central axis designed as a road. The garden is surrounded by an inner wall of 2 and 3 meters high. The garden to the north off İnönü Boulevard was designed for accessibility.

There are no other parallel surrounding buildings...
anniversary of the Parliament and National Sovereignty, causes the highest point of the complex, Kabatepe, to reach even higher. The Speaker's Park, which was created with the same goal, contains one tree for each of the speakers that have served in the TBMM from the time of the first Speaker, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk until today.

Public Relations Building

In 1978 Prof. Holzmeister, the architect of the building, was invited to Ankara, and he recommended that the Public Relations Building be built without submitting it to a contest, that rather it should be constructed as part of a project under his supervision. Finally, the decision was made, based on the preliminary sketches drawn by the architects Ziya Payız, Muhittin Gürelî and Behruz Çinici, to chose a plan that was in accord with the program that had been prepared: the needs that had to be met were stated and the project was under the direction of the Parliament. The investigations carried out on three different projects chose the Altuğ-Behruz Çinici project and after signing a contract, work was begun.

This building, constructed to the south of the main compound, was built in order to ensure that Members of Parliament could meet with members of the public easily and that they could work in comfort. The Public Relations Section first began to operate in 1984, and is composed of 6 blocks of four floors each. Here there is a separate study for each of the 550 Members of Parliament. There are secretarial offices and a variety of administrative and service units in these blocks as well. The Public Relations building covers an area of 50,000 m², and the total useable space measures 14,000 m².

The four-floor block that contains the rooms of the Members of Parliament was a pre-fabrication construction built from pre-stressed concrete. There are columns measuring 14.5 meters in height that are spaced 6 and 9 meters apart. On each floor there are 18 studies for Members of Parliament and there is a secretarial pool for each floor to share. The rooms are sectioned off by soundproofed, 12 cm. thick demountable partitions. The study sections are constructed of hollow prefabricated components. A specially constructed precast component was used on the external surfaces. The studies are separated by 12 cm. thick interchangeable partitions of soundproofed wood and chipboard covered with melamine. Inside the structure, marble, imitation marble and parquet were used. The window frames are aluminum and the windows are sash windows.

From the axis of the people's entrance of the main building there is an avenue that stretches to the south and there are two arteries that divide this up diagonally into two symmetric blocks, A and B. The Parliamentary Mosque is located at the end of this avenue. By following these two paths, one enters a two-columned portico that is located under the meeting halls, and then towards the main entrance, where one can reach the waiting room, there is a wide and high area where there is a fountain. Above this there is a graduated dome that provides natural light. All the floors can be viewed from here.

The complex that lies to the south of the Public Relations building and in which the Parliamentary Mosque, the library and the pool are located, was again designed by the team of Altuğ-Behruz Çinici. This area forms a whole with the blocks of the Public Relations. There is a large square located between the two sections.
Legislative Period - The time between two general elections; this period is of 5 years, if it has not been lengthened according to the Constitution, or if an early election has not been called.

Legislative Year - The period that starts from 1 October and continues until 30 September.

General Assembly - The upper organ that is responsible for the legislative and supervisory processes; opinions are expressed, discussed and finally decided upon here. The General Assembly meets on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 15.00 - 19.00, except on official holidays. The days and hours when the General Assembly meets can be altered on a proposal from the Advisory Council.

Agenda - A legal document that contains the matters that the Parliament will execute. The General Assembly works on these matters according to the agenda and the order contained there. The agenda is handed out as printed booklet to the Members of Parliament and the Ministries and institutions concerned every working day of the Parliament. The order in which matters appear on the agenda is determined by the order in which they are received by the Office of the Speaker. The following sections can be found on the agenda:

1) The Presentations to the General Assembly by the Speaker’s Office
2) Business that will take place on the Special Agenda
3) Elections
4) Matters on which votes must be taken
5) Parliamentary Investigative Reports
6) General Views and Previews concerning matters that need to have Parliamentary Investigations carried out
7) Oral Questions
8) Drafts and Proposals of Laws and other matters coming from the Committees

Special Agenda - Special meetings made at the suggestion of the Advisory Council concerning one or a few matters that are seen to be of utmost importance by the General Assembly of the Parliament. The initiative for creating a special agenda belongs to the Advisory Council. The second part of the agenda booklet forms the “Business of the Special Agenda,” which is generally kept empty. This is because only Advisory Council can decide on what day which subject or which matter can appear on the Special Agenda.

Speeches that are not on the Agenda - This is a speech given by a Member of Parliament on a matter that they think the General Assembly should be informed that does not exceed five minutes in time. Non-agenda speeches are at the discretion of the Speaker and at one sitting no more than three people can be given this privilege. A minister who represents the government can respond to this speech.

Minimum Number (Quorum) for Sessions - This is the minimum number of Members of Parliament needed for the General Assembly or the Committees to meet. If there is no other ruling in the Constitution, then at least 1/3 of the General Assembly must be present for it to meet. The Speaker, who directs the sitting, looks over the Parliament after it has convened and if there enough members are present then the sitting commences, if the Speaker is in doubt then a roll call is taken.

Minimum Number (Quorum) for a Decision - Just as there is a minimum number of Members of Parliament present for the Parliament to function, there must also be a minimum number present for decisions to be taken. If there is no ruling in the Constitution, the laws or the Rules of Procedure stating otherwise, then in matters presented to the vote in the General Assembly a straight majority is enough; however, this majority cannot consist of less than one more than 1/3 of the total number of members (139 Members of Parliament)

Session - The Meeting of the General Assembly that occurs on certain days.

Sitting - One of the each parts of a session, divided by an interval. Under normal conditions, sittings are open to everyone.

Closed Sitting - Normally, the General Assembly functions openly. But, if the Prime Minister or a minister or a political party group or 20 Members of Parliament make a request in writing then the General Assembly can proceed in a closed sitting. When the proposal for a closed sitting is made, all those people except those who should be present must leave the General Assembly Hall and the talks begin by listening to the proposal for a closed sitting.

Total Membership - The total number of Members of Parliament set out in the Constitution; this number is 550. The vacancy of a Seat in Parliament does not change this number.

First Meeting - The first session after the Supreme Board of Elections has announced the results of the election of Members of Parliament in a general election; five days after the announcement at 15:00 the General Assembly gathers, without being called.
The Swearing-in ceremony is carried out alphabetically according to the area they represent, their surname and first name. The number of clerical members is 7; this number can be increased on a suggestion of the Advisory council and a decision by the General Assembly. Their role is to carry out the administrative and financial matters of the Parliament and to execute matters of security in accordance with the instructions of the Speaker; they conduct special ceremonies and present suggestions concerned with the Parliamentary budget to the Speaker and hand out entrance cards.

Adjoining - The postponement of the functioning of the parliament, for any reason, for a period not to exceed 15 days.

Extraordinary Session - A meeting called by the President or Speaker while the Parliament is on holiday or adjourned. The President can call a meeting directly or at the request of the Cabinet. If the Speaker deems it necessary he/she can decide to call the meeting directly. If there is a justification proposal, signed by 1/5 of the Members of Parliament, then the Speaker calls an extraordinary meeting no later than 7 days. After being called, the Members of Parliament gather at the hour and date determined for the extraordinary meeting.

Bureau of the Assembly - The Council consists of the Speaker, four deputy heads, 7 clerical members and 3 administrative members on the Bureau of the Assembly; they function as set out in the laws and the Rules of Procedure of Parliament. When there is a claim of a serious error in the voting procedures of the General Assembly or during elections, then the Bureau of the Assembly steps in. If the Speaker sees the need for views concerning his/her own duties, he/she can take advisement from the Bureau of the Assembly. In addition, the Bureau of the Assembly makes decisions concerning external affairs, and the essential duties of the Members of Parliament and the personnel of the Parliament, as well as their social and health needs and security, and they produce statues concerning these.

Deputy Speakers - There are four deputy speakers in the Parliament. They direct the debates in the General Assembly in the absence of the Speaker, keep the minutes of the debates and ensure that the order of the agenda is followed. Which sessions and sittings the deputy speakers conduct is decided by the Speaker.

Clerical Members - The number of clerical members is 7; this number can be increased on a suggestion of the Advisory council and a decision by the General Assembly. Their role is to carry out the administrative and financial matters of the Parliament and to execute matters of security in accordance with the instructions of the Speaker; they conduct special ceremonies and present suggestions concerned with the Parliamentary budget to the Speaker and hand out entrance cards.

Advisory Council - This council is headed up by the Speaker, or a political party group leader or one of the Deputy speakers or a Member of Parliament who has been appointed in writing. The Parliamentary Rules of Procedure give the Advisory Council many duties. It ensures cooperation between the party groups and the smooth functioning of the Parliament; if the Speaker wishes it can offer advice as well.

Political Party Groups - This is an organ established according to the Constitution and Rules of Procedure of every party that consists of at least 20 Members of Parliament that represents the party in Parliament. The political party groups are organized and function according to their own Rules of Procedure, which is prepared under the auspices of the Rules and Procedures of the Parliament. The Political Party Groups meet once a week and evaluate the work that has been done and make a variety of decisions.

Committees - The committees, established according to the framework of the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure of the TBMM, carry out the basic functions of the legislative and supervisory roles of the Parliament. There are 17 Permanent Committees in the Parliament and every one of these has a different role. In general, the role of the committees is to realize the legislative and supervisory functions of the TBMM and to contribute to matters in their areas of expertise. The first address to which the activities of the Parliament go is generally the committees. The first address that discusses a draft or proposal of a law or a legal ruling is the committee. The report that the committee prepares is sent on to the General Assembly. There are two elections to the committees for one legislative period. The period of duty for those chosen in the first election is 2 years, while that of the second is 3 years.

Primary Committee - The committee that prepares the report that is debated by the General Assembly.

Secondary Committee - The Secondary Committee is the committee that does the fundamental work on the matter to be investigated. If the Secondary Committee is unable to prepare its report in the time designated to it this does not prevent the Primary Committee from preparing its own report.

Joint Committee - This is a temporary committee formed of members from the Constitutional and Justice Committees according to the provisions of the Rules of Procedure. The Joint Committee decides whether political immunity should be lifted, preserved, or preserved until such a time that the person involved ceases to be a minister. There are three types of Joint Committees; that concerned with the lifting of immunity, that concerned with inappropriateness of an action in accordance with the law, and that concerned with the continued absence of a Member of Parliament.

General Election - The election that, under normal circumstances, is held every five years according to the Constitution and the laws.

Early Election - The legislative period for a Parliament is five years under normal circumstances. An early election can be called if the Parliament decides to renew the election before this time period has finished. According to certain conditions in the Constitution, an early election can also be called by the President.
Bye-Elections – Bye-elections are called to fill any empty seats in Parliament and can only be called once in every legislative period. However, a bye-election cannot be held before 30 months have passed since a general election. If the number of empty seats is 5% of the total number of members, then a bye-election must be held within 3 months. A bye-election cannot be held one year before a general election. In addition to this, if a province or constituency is left without a representative in the Parliament then a bye-election is held on the first Sunday 90 days after that seat was vacated.

Voting – All decisions taken by the General Assembly are taken by voting; there are three types of votes, show of hands, and open and secret ballots. Which kind of vote is to be held and when is determined by the Constitution, the laws and the Rules of Procedure.

Vote by Show of Hands – This type of voting is carried out by Members of Parliament raising their hands; if they are in doubt they are to stand. If five Members stand then the hall is divided into those who are for and those who are against, and the vote is taken by count of hands. If there is doubt about the outcome of the vote, then the vote is taken electronically. This is the most common form of voting.

Open Ballot - There are different ways that an open ballot can be carried out. The General Assembly decides which form of open ballot is to be used. The open ballot can be carried out in one of three ways: the Member of Parliament can place a disc on which their name, surname and constituency are written in a box, or they can operate an electronic mechanism, or they can state “In favor,” “Against” or “Abstain” out loud.

Secret Ballot - This type of ballot is carried out by the Member of Parliament placing a disc, on which there is no writing, in an envelope and placing the envelope in a box on the podium. A white disc represents a vote in favor, green means the Member has abstained and red means that the vote is against the proposal. The Members of Parliament prepare their vote in private booths.

Legislative Non-Accountability – This expression means that a Member of Parliament cannot be held responsible outside the Parliament for the way they vote or what they say during the legislative and supervisory functions of the General Assembly. Legislative Non-Accountability is absolute and permanent.

Legislative Immunity - Legislative immunity is a privilege awarded to Members of Parliament that means they are exempt from punishment. In other words, a Member of Parliament who has committed a crime before or after an election cannot be detained, interrogated, arrested or tried. There are exceptions to legislative immunity set out in the Constitution.

Rules of Procedure of the TBMM – The decisions of the Parliament that regulate the functioning and establishment of the Parliament in the light of the regulations of the Constitution are known as the Rules of Procedure of the TBMM. These are also unofficially known as the “silent constitution” and the “secret constitution.” They are called this because the Rules of Procedure even affect the way in which changes to the Constitution occur, as well as the fact that the Rules of Procedure are important for both the Parliament and national politics. The Rules of Procedure, made by the TBMM itself, are an expression and a detailed explanation of the general rules found in the Constitution governing the Legislative Organ. Despite this, they are not considered as laws, but rather an expression of the decisions of the Parliament.

Law – The legal regulations passed by Parliament that are general, permanent and mandatory are called laws. The laws are created in the way that has been explained above. The creation of laws is called the function of the legislature.

Proposals and Drafts of Laws - The authority to propose laws belongs to the Cabinet and the Members of Parliament. Proposals made by the Cabinet are called “draft laws” while those made by Members of Parliament are called “proposed laws.” For the sake of brevity both are known as proposals. While a draft law must be signed by all the members of the Cabinet, a proposed law is not dependent on the support of all the Members of Parliament. A proposed law must be supported by at least one Member of Parliament, while more than one Member of Parliament can come together to propose a law.

Proposal for a Question - This is made when a Member of Parliament wants information, answered either verbally or written, from the Prime Minister or a Minister. The proposal for a question must be brief and cannot be unjustified or contain matters that are personal or concerned with another’s private life or contain any personal comments.

Proposal for Change - This is what a proposal for any change made by a Member of Parliament, a relevant Committee or the government concerning a proposed or draft law that appears on the Agenda. A proposal for change can call for the rejection of an article, for the return of the law in its entirety or just one article to the Committee or the adding of an appendix or a temporary article. A Proposal for Change must make it clear which ruling is requested to be changed, annulled or appended.

General Debate - This is a debate held in the General Assembly on a matter that is concerned with social or state activities. A general debate can be requested by the government, a political party group or at least twenty Members of Parliament. This request, which is put on the General Papers list, is announced to the Members of Parliament and the government. Whether a general debate will be held or not is decided by the General Assembly.

Second Debate - It is possible that a justified request be made for a certain article of a proposal or draft, or a proposal or draft in its entirety to be debated once again. A Primary Committee or the government can make a request for a second debate, and this can only happen once. Such a request is decided, after the opinion of the Advisory Council has been sought, in the General Assembly without debate and by a show of hands.

Priority Debate - This occurs when any proposal or draft that is on the agenda of the General Assembly is debated before the proposal or draft that precedes it on the agenda. For a priority debate to occur the government or Primary Committee must apply with justification to the General Assembly and is voted on by a show of hands in the General Assembly.

Parliamentary Investigation - This is an investigation carried out by the Parliament to attain information on a certain subject. Parliamentary investigations are carried out by a special committee that is chosen according to general regulations. The members of the committee and the details of their working regulations are determined by the Office of the Speaker and the General Assembly. State and trade secrets are outside the scope of Parliamentary investigations.

Censure Motion – The censure motion is a way for the Parliament to scrutinize the general policies of the Cabinet or the policies and activities carried out by a Minister in their ministry. A censure motion is given by a political party group or by at least 20 Members of Parliament. The General Assembly can dismiss the Cabinet or any minister through a censure motion.

Parliamentary Inquiry - A Parliamentary inquiry can be launched by a proposal made by a group of Members of Parliament to investigate a serving or former Prime Minister or Ministers; the group must have at least 10% of the total number of seats. The decision to open a Parliamentary inquiry is reached by a secret ballot in the General Assembly. If the decision to open an inquiry is reached, then a committee consisting of 15 people is formed and any decision made by the General Assembly is dependent on the report prepared by this committee. The Prime Minister or Minister concerned can be sent to the Constitutional Court.
A General View from the TBMM Campus