

# R. T. ERDOGAN BY THE NUMBERS

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By **Jirair Tutunjian**, Toronto, 4 June 2021

***Getting to know you***  
***Getting to know all about you***  
***Getting to like you...***  
*The lyrics from The King and I*

Contrary to the song, getting to know all about Recep Tayyip Erdogan doesn't make the mordant-looking president of Turkey likeable. In fact, the opposite is true.

Erdogan seemingly makes news every hour of the day. The headline fabricator boasts, accuses, fulminates, threatens, and explodes in anger. One minute he is your enemy and the next he sends peace-feelers...a human cauldron who is the darling of foreign correspondents because they can always depend on him for over-the-top outbursts. He has threatened the leaders of half-a-dozen European states in addition to that of half-a-dozen Arab states. He has interfered in the internal politics of European states. In the presence of his staff, he has tossed in the garbage a letter from President Donald Trump. He has recklessly promised to establish a Turkic Empire from Istanbul to China unmindful that his friends Russia, Iran, and the "stans"—not to mention Beijing—would take umbrage at having an aggressive and theocratic empire next door which is run from Ankara. He threatened to take Cyprus and Greece if the Hellenic twins didn't behave. He also said President Macron of France needed psychiatric help. Here are some cold numbers about the ex-footballer who wants to soar in Turkish history annals higher than his long-dead rival Kemal Ataturk and the so-called Suleiman the Magnificent.

DATE OF BIRTH: 1954 Height: 185 cm. Married: 1978 Spouse: Emine

CHILDREN: 4; (Ahmet Burak, Esra, Bilal, and Sumeyye)

YEARS IN POWER: 19

HEALTH: Colon cancer surgery in 2011. Alleged to have fainting spells and is epileptic.

PERSONALITY: Thin-skinned, arrogant, aggressive, boastful, and short-tempered.

CRIMINAL CONVICTION: Served four months in jail for reciting a nationalistic poem which the judge said encouraged violence and religious/racial hatred. As a result of the conviction, he lost his job as Istanbul's mayor.

SALARY: \$85,000 to \$105,000 (some sources say \$65,000)

NET WORTH: More than \$110 million. He unconvincingly claims his wealth is derived from investments in the property and stock market. U.S. intelligence sources say it is based on the privatization of state-owned oil refineries. He was broke when he entered politics. He has also said his wealth is derived from gifts from his elder son Ahmed Burak. A few years ago, an investigation by

Germany's *BILD* newspaper revealed Ahmed Burak had "a net worth of \$80 million without a clear source." Erdogan's younger son (Bilal) is also wealthy. He has been associated with criminals and worked with smugglers to steal archeological relics from Iraq and Syria.

An intercepted phone call reportedly overheard Erdogan instructing a bank to "liquidate perhaps a billion dollars in cash." Michael Rubin, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, has written that Erdogan is a "billionaire many times over." It's crystal-clear patriotic and devout Muslim Erdogan has robbed from Turkey to fatten his pockets.

**BANK ACCOUNTS:** Has 8 Swiss bank accounts and controls 3 trusts in the Isle of Man. Reportedly, he has more than a billion dollars (cash and gold bullion) hidden in purpose-made underground walk-in vaults in his Istanbul family compound.

**SPENDING HABITS:** Despite his and his wife's advertised reputation as modestly-living devout Muslims, he spent \$185 million to refurbish his jet. Mrs. Erdogan likes to shop: she once spent \$60,000 during a shopping spree at a Polish antique bazaar while "frugal" Erdogans think nothing of paying \$2,400 for a kilogram of tea while visiting England.

**HOME:** Presidential Palace aka White House, Ankara. It cost \$615 million although critics say the actual price tag was twice that. Turkey's state-owned Housing and Development Administration refuses to divulge the true cost on the grounds that releasing the information could hurt Turkey's economy. The palace, located on 150,000 sq. metres of land, is 30 times larger than the White House and is the largest presidential palace built in the past century. The residence has 1,150 rooms and carpets worth \$52 million and gold-inlaid glasses that cost \$1,170 each. The imported marble (for the floors) cost Euro 3,000 per square meter. The silk wallpaper is priced at \$3,200 a roll. The 10 ft. high extra-large double doors cost \$8 million.

The residence's architectural style is a mishmash of Ottoman combined with Art Deco resulting in a monstrosity which recalls the '20s and '30s fascist style of Mussolini's and Hitler's edifice complexes. An architect said the palace "has taken the stones of the Dolmabahce Palace and some of Topkapi Palace's. The former, Turkey's most famous palace (built by the architect Balian family for Sultan Abdul Mejid I in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century) has 285 rooms compared to Erdogan's palace which has 1,150 rooms. Cost of running the residence is: 4.5 million liras a day. It's pointless to mention the cost in dollars because the lira' value is dropping almost every day. Cost of heating and electricity? Off the charts.

**SCANDALS:** Too many to cite. However, the \$100 billion corruption scandal (2013) led to the arrest of Erdogan's allies and incriminated him but Teflon Erdogan survived the scandal.

**DOMESTIC ENEMIES:** Countless (18 million Kurds, 15 million Alevi), millions of progressives ("White Turks"), feminists, the LGBTQ sector, and Fethullah Gulen, the cleric who is the head of the Gulen Foundation and lives in the U.S.

**DOMESTIC ENEMIES (CONT.):** His government has fired 6,000 academics, 4,000 judges and prosecutor, and sued 2,000 citizens for defamation. Following the coup attempt in 2016, he jailed 152 journalists, caused the firing of 2,500 journalists, and shuttered 189 independent media outlets (28 TV stations, 36 radio stations, 26 publishing houses, 66 newspapers, 19 magazines, 26 news agencies, and three universities. Following the coup, 71,000 people were detained and 41,000 arrested. Countless Kurds, including Kurdish party leader (Salahettin Demirtas) are in jail. Some 350 policemen were jailed for investigating a corruption scandal Erdogan was linked to.

**FOREIGN ENEMIES:** President Emmanuel Macron of France, former French President Francois Hollande, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi of Egypt, former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, the Saudi royal family, Yemen, the Gulf Emirates except for Qatar, the presidents of Greece and Cyprus, social media, Armenia, Armenian, Kurd and Assyrian diasporas, Shiites, democrats and peace-loving people everywhere. In addition to attacking half-a-dozen European leaders, he has also bitten the hand of Chancellor Angela Merkel, Turkey's main supporter in Europe.

**BIZARRE BEHAVIOR:** Too many to cite. Walked out, in a huff, from an international conference in Switzerland because the moderator wouldn't give him additional time. A waiter was arrested for insulting him by allegedly saying: "If Erdogan comes here, I will not even serve tea to him." Miss Turkey (2016) was imprisoned for a year for allegedly insulting him. A twelve-year-old boy was dragged to court for "insulting" him on social network. He threatened Armenians with another Genocide and told the Israelis that Jerusalem belonged to Turkey. He claimed Turks had launched the first space mission, Turks discovered America, and that the Natives of the Americas are Turks.

All in all, a most interesting character on the international political stage and certainly the most unpredictable, dangerous and unbalanced: an urgent candidate for the psychiatrist's couch. Turks keep re-electing the sociopath. That says a lot about Turkey's electorate.

**There are no comments yet.**