

Reform in Turkey

In “Erdogan Stokes the Sectarian Fires” (Op-Ed, nytimes.com, Oct. 8), Halil M. Karaveli not only tries to justify the 1960 military coup in Turkey but also accuses Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of stoking sectarian tensions.

Turkey’s impressive reform process since 2002 has been characterized by many scholars as a “silent revolution” that has radically changed democratic standards. Turkey is no more a country of coups. The steps taken by the government have never been sectarian. We have been taking steps to embrace the whole nation regardless of faith, ethnic origin or lifestyle.

The new democratization package announced last month is proof of this determination. It covers various issues, from the electoral system to the Kurdish issue to hate crimes to protection of personal data, to respond to the aspirations of our people.

As part of the package, respect for different lifestyles is safeguarded; education in different languages, including Kurdish, is allowed in private schools; Mor Gabriel Monastery has been returned to the Syriac community; and a public university in Nevsehir has been named after a pivotal figure of the Alevi-Bektasi tradition.

As a next step, the government is working on another package to meet the outstanding issues of Alevis.

How can Mr. Erdogan be accused of stoking sectarian fires when he is taking such radical steps shaking the establishment? As Caliph Ali says, “There is enough light for one who wants to see.”

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