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MARMARA UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

# Between rock and hard place: Local leaders dealing with citizen protests against national policies

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**NALAS**

Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe  
Réseau des Associations de Pouvoirs Locaux de l'Europe du Sud-Est

## Mayors with government and against protests (hard stance)

- ▶ Madrid Mayor wants city centre 'no protest' zone (27 Mar 2014)
- ▶ Ana Botella, mayor of Spain's capital city, wants to "regulate" the right to hold public demonstrations in the centre of Madrid in the wake of police clashes with protesters after last weekend's "March for Dignity".
- ▶ "The right to demonstrate can and must be regulated," she stated... Botella, of the right-wing PP (Popular Party) which also controls Spain's national government...



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The politician has demanded that protests be banned from the city centre but refused to say where they should be moved to. FABRICE COFFRINI / AFP

### Madrid Mayor wants city centre 'no protest' zone

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Ana Botella, mayor of Spain's capital city, wants to "regulate" the right to hold public demonstrations in the centre of Madrid in the wake of police clashes with protesters after last weekend's "March for Dignity".

## Mayors with government and against protests (hard stance)

- ▶ Ankara Mayor vows to build 'vandalism museum' to exhibit damage inflicted by Gezi protesters (July 13, 2013)
- ▶ Ankara Mayor has said in a statement that a 'vandalism museum' will be built to exhibit the damage caused to public property by Gezi protesters.
- ▶ Gökçek had stirred much debate when he launched hashtag wars on Twitter against media outlets BBC and CNN, accusing them of conspiracy and misleading reports. He continued his Gezi-bashing crusade by announcing his plan to build the museum and describing the protests as "terror events."

### Ankara Mayor vows to build 'vandalism museum' to exhibit damage inflicted by Gezi protesters

ANKARA



Ankara Mayor has said in a statement that a 'vandalism museum' will be built to exhibit the damage caused to public property by Gezi protesters.



# Mayors between «soft» and «absent» approach

- ▶ No shopping mall or hotel at Gezi Park, says Istanbul mayor (June 8, 2013)
- ▶ Kadir Topbaş emphasizes that plans to build replica Ottoman barracks will go ahead and be redesigned as a museum.
- ▶ Istanbul mayor Kadir Topbaş gave an interview expressing concern that the police's actions would jeopardise Istanbul's bid to host the 2020 Summer Olympics, (Wikipedia)
- ▶ **Note:** While Mayor was mainly absent from the stages, the Governor of Istanbul (representative of the central government) played the role of tempering the protesters.

## No shopping mall or hotel at Gezi Park, says Istanbul mayor

Kadir Topbaş emphasizes that plans to build replica Ottoman barracks will go ahead and be redesigned as a museum

BY TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF AND AP | June 8, 2013, 6:40 pm |

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Protesters stand on the roof of Ataturk Cultural center during a protest at Taksim square in Istanbul, Tuesday, June 4 (photo credit: AP/Kostas Tsironis)

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**T**urkey will not build a shopping mall or hotels at Taksim's Gezi Park, said Istanbul mayor Kadir Topbaş on Saturday, in a bid to further ease tensions with protesters after more than 10 days of mass demonstrations across the country.

# Mayors standing with protesters against government

- ▶ **Opposition's candidate for Istanbul (former mayor of Şişli district of Istanbul) Mustafa Sarıgül**
- ▶ (Note: Main opposition CHP had initially supported construction on the Gezi-park project in the municipal council)
- ▶ **Mustafa Sarıgül: The spirit of Gezi supports me (8. 10.2013).** He reacted to the criticism that he did not support enough the Gezi protest movement. He said that from the very first day of the protests he was present at the square, and that they undertook mission as municipality team. He declared that he supported Gezi protests from behind the scenes.



# Mayors going in between: active neutral stance

## The Arab Spring: massive protests

- ▶ Mayor of Lab-wa-Mleeh (Jordan) Atef Rawahneh: Neutral and active approach. Stand by citizen against policies but not against the state.
- ▶ To channel the protests and anger into constructive ways: local consultation committees established with local community and religious leaders, youth, civil society.
- ▶ Caring for image of the community: Mayor pays from his pocket the reparation of the municipal hall, out of care for the image of the community.





# Between rock and hard place: Local leaders dealing with citizen protests against national policies

- What is at stake: state/regime or specific policies?
- Who is to blame: national or local policies/politics?
- Protests as politics: Party affiliation and political alliances

