



Many Turks are angry that migrants and refugees are celebrating their new-found freedom like these Afghans in Izmir, while Turkish citizens are having to weather a major economic crisis | Photo: Uygur Ozel/Imago

Now, some members of the public are openly expressing their disapproval, using migrants as a convenient scapegoat: [Public resentments against migrants](#) and refugees could be seen on national television screens last week when thousands of football fans began chanting "we don't want any refugees in our country" during a World Cup qualifying match.

Scapegoat for failing economy

A survey published by the Turkish Aksoy polling organization showed that 85% of respondents were "worried" about the prospect of another mass arrival of migrants — this time it would be Afghans fleeing the Taliban who took over the country last month following 20 years of war.

Analyst Deniz Senol Sert of Istanbul's Ozyegin University says that this antagonistic sentiment against migrants and refugees in general is likely to continue "(a)s long as this competition for resources continues" in Turkey's failing economy.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is trying to walk a fine line between party politics and his own interests | Photo: Reuters

She added that this was also bound to remain a major political issue for years to come: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan – who once urged Turks to be "compassionate" towards those seeking shelter – has now started to stress that one in 18 people in the country already is a refugee or a migrant, hinting at ideas like growing foreign infiltration without saying quite as much.

The president appears to be using migration as a [political bargaining tool](#) both at home and abroad: on the one hand, he told the West that Turkey was not willing to become Europe's "refugee warehouse," while indicating on the other hand that Turkey needed another pact with the EU in order to consider cooperating.

This might fill the government's coffers for the time being, but with Turkey reportedly edging toward "intense corruption" according to a report the latest Worldwide Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International, those funds may not last very long.