

The waBenzi of Erdogan's Turkey

[Here](#).

I learned decades ago that the African rulers and their courtiers in East Africa were wittily referred to by locals as the “waBenzi” or “people of the Mercedes Benz.”

Erdogan, who has built himself a 1,150-room palace, is not against extravagance, as long as it is his or that of his courtiers. And one of Erdogan's courtiers is the current Director of Religions Affairs, Mehmet Gormez, who saw fit to have the government pay \$384,000 for his very own Mercedes. An outcry followed; Gormez promised to return it; now Citizen Erdogan, who is also Padishah of all he surveys, has promised to supply another.

These are the waBenzi of Turkey, a country that has been descending into something like the sub-Saharan countries where the waBenzi were first identified and appositely named.