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THE PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS OF TÜRKİYE-EGYPT RELATIONS: STRATEGIC, ECONOMIC, AND DIPLOMATIC PERSPECTIVES

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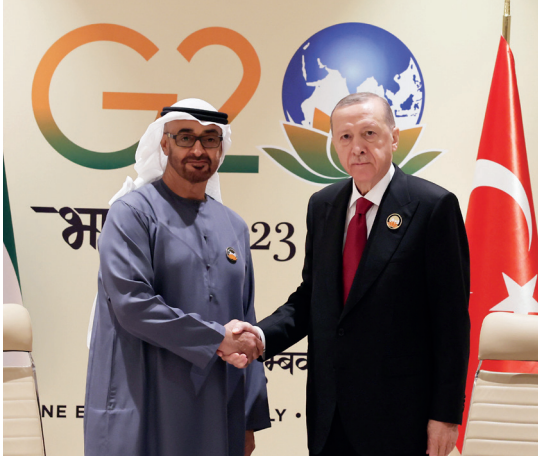
THE PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS OF TÜRKIYE-EGYPT RELATIONS: STRATEGIC, ECONOMIC, AND DIPLOMATIC PERSPECTIVES

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INTRODUCTION

Türkiye-Egypt relations possess a multidimensional structure rooted in historical foundations, strategic importance, and regional dynamics. The diplomatic, economic, and security dimensions of the relations between the two countries have the potential to deeply impact the geopolitical balances in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, and Africa. Although Türkiye and Egypt share a rich common history dating back to the Ottoman period, their relationship has experienced fluctuations over time, driven by shifting international and regional contexts. Particularly during the Republican era, relations between Türkiye and Egypt have been shaped by each country's domestic political dynamics, regional interests, and interactions with international powers.

In recent years, Türkiye-Egypt relations have been tested by diplomatic tensions following the Arab uprisings and the 2013 military

coup in Egypt. Türkiye's support for the democratically elected government of Mohamed Morsi in Egypt and the subsequent criticisms by Egypt's new administration towards Türkiye's stance led to a breakdown in diplomatic relations between the two countries. This period witnessed the withdrawal of ambassadors and a downgrading of diplomatic representation. However, under the influence of regional and international dynamics, Türkiye and Egypt have recently begun exploring ways to revive their relations and capitalise on opportunities for cooperation. In this context, the diplomatic normalisation process offers significant insights into the future of relations between the two countries.

Türkiye-Egypt relations are shaped by strategic, economic, and diplomatic dynamics that, while distinct, are intricately intertwined. From a strategic perspective, key issues include the energy competition in the Eastern

Mediterranean, opposing policies in the Libyan crisis, and differing approaches to the Palestinian issue—each influencing the regional power projection of both nations. In the realm of security, Türkiye and Egypt pursue divergent strategic interests in regions such as Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Horn of Africa, but also share the potential for cooperation based on common threat perceptions and interests. On the economic and trade front, bilateral trade volumes, investments, and economic cooperation agreements contribute to the deepening of relations and increasing mutual interdependence.

This study aims to analyse the strategic, economic, and diplomatic dimensions of Türkiye-Egypt relations, assessing how these relations have evolved and exploring potential

future trajectories. By examining the historical ties and recent developments between Türkiye and Egypt, this work will highlight the dynamics of competition and cooperation between the two nations. Additionally, it will analyse the impact of regional and international factors on Türkiye-Egypt relations and provide projections regarding how these relations might evolve in the future. In this framework, the strategic areas of cooperation and competition between Türkiye and Egypt are of crucial importance for ensuring regional security and stability. Therefore, this study will provide a comprehensive analysis of Türkiye-Egypt relations, evaluate their impact on regional and international politics, and offer policy recommendations on how to develop a sustainable and constructive model of cooperation for both countries.

THE LEGACY OF OTTOMAN TÜRKİYE IN RELATIONS WITH EGYPT



The Yunus Emre Institute in Cairo (Cairo YEE) organized a conference and exhibition titled "The Egypt Albums in Sultan Abdulhamid II's Yıldız Palace Photograph Collection" in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey.

The historical relations between Türkiye and Egypt, beginning with the conquest of Egypt by Ottoman Türkiye during the reign of Sultan Selim I and extending into the republican period, have a rich and multilayered past. Today, the relations between the two countries are evaluated within the context of the positive impact of the shared socio-cultural values inherited from the Ottoman legacy and the political and diplomatic developments of the republican era.¹ Understanding the historical roots and changing dynamics of these relations is important to better comprehend how Türkiye and Egypt interact today. The developments in both the Ottoman and republican periods necessitate a deep examination of the factors that form the basis of this interaction and the shaping of cooperation between the two countries.

In this context, Ottoman Türkiye, under Sultan Selim I, annexed Egypt in 1517 after

defeating the Mamluk Sultanate.² During this period, Egypt became an important province for the Ottomans, and its strategic location, control over trade routes between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and the agricultural wealth provided by the Nile River were of great significance to Ottoman Türkiye. The Ottoman administration adopted a governance model in Egypt where local administrators and Mamluk-origin beys remained influential, helping to preserve local dynamics in the region.

Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 marked a turning point in Ottoman-Egyptian relations. Although the literature highlights the weakening control of Ottoman Türkiye during this invasion, after Napoleon was forced to withdraw from Egypt, the Ottomans appointed Muhammad Ali Pasha as the governor of Egypt. Muhammad Ali Pasha's efforts to act independently from Ottoman Türkiye

1 İsmail Numan Telci, "Türkiye – Mısır İlişkileri: İş Birliğinden Çatışmaya", *"Devrim Sonrası Mısır Dış Politikası"*, ed. İsmail Numan Telci, SETA Vakfı İktisadi İşletmesi, 2018, s.192-193.

2 Ahmet Kavas, "Osmanlı Afrika İlişkileri, Kitabevi, İstanbul, 3. Baskı, 2015, 30-31.

led to several conflicts between the Ottoman state and Egypt, prompting interventions from Britain and other European powers.³ Especially after the death of Muhammad Ali Pasha, Egypt's strategic importance and the opening of the Suez Canal increased British interest in the region. In 1882, Britain effectively occupied Egypt, and although Egypt remained an Ottoman khedivate until 1914, it was practically under British control.⁴

With the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye in 1923, relations between Türkiye and Egypt began to reshape, influenced by the Ottoman past. During Atatürk's era, Türkiye-Egypt relations were turbulent until 1934 due to the different governance approaches of the two countries. These differences hindered the development of relations, but when serious tensions arose, both countries sought not to escalate them further. As two of the most powerful and geopolitically significant countries in the Middle East, the leaders of both Türkiye and Egypt did not want to sever relations. The shared security concerns in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, which emerged after Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, led to stability in Türkiye-Egypt relations, enabling the signing of friendship and residence treaties and a nationality agreement in 1937. Britain's influence was evident in these developments, as seen in Egypt's decision under British pressure to close the Suez Canal to Italian ships. However, attributing the rapprochement between Türkiye and Egypt sole-

ly to Britain would be insufficient; the growing global tensions after 1934 also played a significant role in bringing the two countries closer together.⁵

The establishment of Israel in 1948 marked a critical turning point in the Middle East, leading to regime changes in the Arab world, the rise of nationalism, anti-Western policies, and the Arab-Israeli wars. These developments accelerated following Gamal Abdel Nasser's rise to power in Egypt in 1952. During the Cold War, while Türkiye aligned closely with Western countries such as the United States and Britain, Egypt, under Nasser, formed close ties with the Soviet Union. As a result, relations between Türkiye and Egypt remained limited during these years.⁶

With the end of the Cold War, Türkiye and Egypt found opportunities to establish closer relations. However, following the Arab uprisings in 2011 and the military coup in Egypt in 2013, relations between the two countries again became strained. While Türkiye supported the democratically elected government of Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's new administration under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi criticised Türkiye's stance. The political tensions of this period led to the downgrading of diplomatic representation between Türkiye and Egypt.⁷ Nevertheless, socio-cultural and economic relations between the two countries continued, and in recent years, driven by regional and international dynamics, Türkiye and Egypt

3 Zekeriya Işık, "19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Dış Politikası Üzerinde İngiliz Tesiri" *Hitit Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2011, p. 45-61.; Fuad Fahmy, "Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa: Osmanlı Valiliğinden Mısır Sultanlığına", *Vakıfbank Kültür Yayınları*, Birinci Baskı, 2020, s. 34-42.

4 Zekeriya Işık, "19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Dış Politikası Üzerinde İngiliz Tesiri" *Hitit Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Vol. 4, No. 2, 2011, p. 45-61.

5 Semih Bulut, "Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye-Mısır İlişkileri (1926-1938)", *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, Vol. 26, No. 78, 2010, s. 535-560.

6 Şinasi Sönmez, "Cemal Abdün Nasır İktidarında Mısır Türkiye İlişkilerinin Türk Basınına Yansımaları (1954-1962)", *Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, Vol. 11 No. 43, 2009, s. 491-516.

7 "Mısır Türkiye'nin Büyükelçisini 'İstenmeyen Adam' İlan Etti", *BBC News*, 23 November 2013.

have entered a process of rapprochement.

Thus, the historical relations between Türkiye and Egypt can be conceptualised as an evolving interaction process shaped by the geographical proximity, strategic interests, and rich socio-cultural heritage of the two nations. This relationship, which began with Sultan Selim I's annexation of Egypt into Ottoman Türkiye's territories in 1517, started with a period of intense military, economic, and cultural ties, but fluctuated over time due to changing regional power dynamics, international interventions, and different political choices. In the republican period, relations between Türkiye and Egypt experienced ups and downs depending on the domestic political dynamics of both countries and their relations with the West. Despite the political tensions of recent years, both countries are currently making efforts to revive their relations, supported by the harmony provided by their shared historical legacy and socio-cultural values.

SOCIO-CULTURAL HARMONY

The socio-cultural relations between Türkiye and Egypt have developed thanks to both countries' location within the Middle East and the Mediterranean ba-

sin and the historical ties that have continued since the Ottoman period. The cultural interactions between Türkiye and Egypt have consolidated their social structures, languages, arts, and religious practices. While the Ottoman administration applied its own administrative and social systems in Egypt, it also followed a policy of preserving and developing local cultural elements. During this period, Ottoman architecture, art, and crafts had a significant impact on Egypt, and a rich cultural exchange took place between Istanbul and Cairo. The Ottoman influence is especially evident in the mosques and other religious structures built in Egypt. Furthermore, throughout the Ottoman period, a series of cultural and intellectual exchanges occurred between Istanbul and Cairo, influencing intellectual movements and religious thought in both countries.⁸

Cultural diplomacy stands out as a tool for strengthening relations between Türkiye and Egypt. Both countries aim to enhance dialogue and understanding between their peoples by increasing cooperation in culture and education. As part of Türkiye's cultural diplomacy strategy, the Yunus Emre Institute (YEE) opened its first office in Africa in Cairo in 2010. The YEE in Cairo organises various courses and

As part of Türkiye's cultural diplomacy strategy, the Yunus Emre Institute (YEE) opened its first office in Africa in Cairo in 2010. The YEE in Cairo organises various courses and events related to the Turkish language, culture, and arts, contributing to the promotion of Turkish culture in Egypt and strengthening the cultural ties between the Egyptian people and Türkiye.

⁸ Erman Artun, "Ortak Türk-Mısır Halk Kültürü Ürünlerinin Araştırılması Üzerine Görüşler" *International Turkey Egypt Relations Symposium and Art Exhibition*, 2009, s. 1-3.

events related to the Turkish language, culture, and arts, contributing to the promotion of Turkish culture in Egypt and strengthening the cultural ties between the Egyptian people and Türkiye.⁹ Similarly, universities in Türkiye offer various scholarship programs and exchange opportunities for Egyptian students. Under the Türkiye Scholarships program run by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), many Egyptian students have the opportunity to study in Türkiye each year, further strengthening academic and cultural ties between the two countries. These students, upon returning to Egypt, contribute to increasing cultural interaction and mutual understanding between the two nations.

Conversely, Egypt offers educational and research opportunities in Islamic and Arab culture to students and researchers from Türkiye. The prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo hosts numerous students and academics from Türkiye, creating a platform for intellectual and religious interaction within the Islamic world. Al-Azhar University's educational activities in the fields of Islamic sciences and the Arabic language provide an important cultural and religious interaction between Türkiye and Egypt. Such academic and religious collaborations help to establish a common ground in the social structures and cultural identities of both countries.¹⁰

Moreover, religious interactions form another dimension of the socio-cultural relations between Türkiye and Egypt. As two important centres of the Islamic world, Türkiye and Egypt have historically influenced each other, particularly in terms of religious leadership and intellectual production. Since the Ottoman period, Istanbul and Cairo have stood

out as significant religious centres within the Islamic world, and the religious interactions between these two cities have contributed to the formation of intellectual and cultural networks within the Muslim world. Al-Azhar University in Egypt has served as a major religious and intellectual centre, educating many students and religious scholars from Türkiye. In this context, Al-Azhar University has been at the centre of religious interactions between Türkiye and Egypt, supporting exchanges between religious leaders and intellectuals from both countries. Similarly, Islamic research centres and theology faculties in Türkiye have hosted students and researchers from Egypt, strengthening religious and intellectual interactions between the two countries.

There is also a similar interaction in the field of music. Turkish and Egyptian music, shaped by the influences of Ottoman and Arab musical traditions, have contributed to the formation of a shared musical heritage between the two countries. Renowned Egyptian artists have garnered a large following in Türkiye, while Turkish musicians have also been influenced by Egyptian music. Particularly artists like Umm Kulthum and Farid El-Atrash enjoy immense popularity in Türkiye, and their music has left a lasting impact on Turkish music. Similarly, Turkish music has a dedicated audience in Egypt, with Turkish musicians participating in music festivals and cultural events in Egypt, enhancing the musical exchange between the two countries.

The socio-cultural relations between Türkiye and Egypt also develop through the sharing of social and cultural values and the strengthening of common cultural codes. Both countries share similar values in their social lives, shaped by a shared historical legacy and cul-

9 "Güncel Haberler", *Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Kahire*.

10 "Türkiye'deki Ezher Mezunları İstişare Toplantısında Buluştu", *Haber7*, 1 June 2024.

tural ties. Hospitality, strong family bonds, the influence of religious beliefs on social life, and traditional cultural practices are key elements forming the common ground between Turkish and Egyptian societies. In this context, media and popular culture also play an important role in the socio-cultural relations between Türkiye and Egypt. Turkish TV series and films attract a large audience in Egypt, increasing interest in Türkiye.¹¹ Similarly, Egypt's popular culture and music have a wide fan base in Türkiye, nurturing interest in Egyptian culture. These media and popular culture interactions are among the key elements that strengthen the cultural ties between Türkiye and Egypt.

In conclusion, the socio-cultural relations between Türkiye and Egypt possess a rich and dynamic structure in terms of historical legacy, cultural diplomacy, religious and artistic interactions, the sharing of social values, and the potential for cultural cooperation. To further strengthen these relations in the future, new projects and initiatives should be developed in areas such as cultural diplomacy, educational collaborations, and media and popular culture exchanges. In this way, the socio-cultural relations between Türkiye and Egypt will not only foster a stronger bond of friendship and understanding between their peoples but also contribute significantly to regional and international peace and stability.

11 "Türk Dizilerinin En Büyük İthalatçıları İspanya, Suudi Arabistan ve Mısır", *İktibas*, 19 February 2024.

STRATEGY AND SECURITY DIMENSION



The strategy and security dimension of Türkiye-Egypt relations play a significant role, as both countries have the potential to influence the geopolitical balance in the Middle East, Eastern Mediterranean, and Africa. While the two nations adopt different approaches to regional security issues, they share the capacity for cooperation based on common threats and interests. Türkiye's efforts to safeguard its rights over the energy resources and maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean, alongside issues such as the Libyan crisis and counterterrorism, intersect with both countries' pursuit of security and stability in the region. In this context, the strategy and security dimension of Türkiye-Egypt relations presents a dynamic structure that encompasses both regional competition and opportunities for cooperation and partnership.

Over the past 15 years, the Arab uprisings that began in Tunisia in 2011 and spread across

the Middle East and North Africa stand out as a critical turning point in the relations between the two countries. The Arab uprisings significantly altered the political landscape in many countries in the Middle East and North Africa, directly affecting Türkiye-Egypt relations. Türkiye viewed this process, also known as the "Arab Spring," as an opportunity to remove barriers to human rights, political freedoms, and civil society and thus supported the uprisings. Türkiye, in particular, supported the popular uprising in Egypt that resulted in the ousting of Hosni Mubarak in 2011, which led to closer ties between the two nations.¹² For instance, according to SIPRI's arms transfer data, the only instance of security equipment trade between Türkiye and Egypt during the republican era occurred with the delivery of three coast guard vessels in 2011 and 2012.¹³

The military coup carried out by General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt in 2013 marked a

¹² "Başbakan Erdoğan-Mursi Buluşması", *TRT Haber*, 30 September 2012.

¹³ For more information: <https://armstransfers.sipri.org/ArmsTransfer/TransferRegister>

significant rupture in Türkiye-Egypt relations. Türkiye condemned the ousting of the elected President Mohamed Morsi and called for his release.¹⁴ This led to a severance of Türkiye's diplomatic ties with Egypt's new administration and a series of mutual denunciations. Diplomatic representation between the two countries was downgraded, ambassadors were recalled, and relations remained strained for a prolonged period. The deterioration in diplomatic ties between the two countries further restricted opportunities for contributing to regional stability, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya.

LIBYA

The Libyan crisis has emerged as one of the most significant and critical areas of regional competition between Türkiye and Egypt. This crisis intensified regional rivalry, as both countries' policies were shaped by their divergent strategic interests and regional visions. Libya's geographical position, energy resources, and strategic importance as a link between Africa and Europe are vital to both Türkiye and Egypt, which share a land and maritime border with Libya. In this context, both countries have supported different local actors in Libya to enhance their influence and strengthen their regional standing.

Türkiye supports the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Libya. This support became more concrete with the signing of a security and military cooperation agreement between Türkiye and the GNA in 2019. This agreement allowed Türkiye to provide military and logistical support to the

GNA, enabling it to maintain control over the capital, Tripoli.¹⁵ Türkiye's support for Libya is also bolstered by a separate agreement that delineates maritime boundaries in the Eastern Mediterranean, securing access to energy resources in line with Türkiye's "Blue Homeland" doctrine.¹⁶ These moves have not only strengthened Türkiye's presence in Libya but also aimed to protect its strategic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean.

On the other hand, Egypt supports the Tobruk-based House of Representatives and the Libyan National Army (LNA), led by General Khalifa Haftar.¹⁷ Egypt's backing of Haftar is driven by several strategic interests. Primarily, Egypt desires a stable government in Libya aligned with its own interests and has supported Haftar's efforts to gain control over large parts of the country. Egypt's support for Haftar is also motivated by concerns about potential threats from Libya to its national security, particularly along its border. Additionally, the fact that Haftar controls areas close to Egypt's border directly influences Egypt's security calculations. Egypt believes that if Haftar can establish stability in eastern Libya, it can better safeguard its border security and regional interests. Beyond providing military, intelligence, and logistical support to Haftar, Egypt has also played an active role in international forums seeking a diplomatic solution to the Libyan crisis.

As an international crisis, Libya has amplified the rivalry between Türkiye and Egypt due to their support for opposing factions, escalating regional competition. Both countries' positions in Libya are further shaped by the

14 "Erdoğan'dan Batı'ya 'Mısır Darbesi' Eleştirisi", *BBC News Türkçe*, 5 July 2013.

15 "Libya ile İmzalanan Güvenlik ve Askeri İş Birliği Anlaşması TBMM'de", *BBC News Türkçe*, 15 December 2019.

16 Muhammet Tarhan, "Türkiye-Libya Deniz Yetki Anlaşması Doğu Akdeniz'de Hak ve Dengeleri Güvenceye Aldı", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 26 November 2021.

17 Ahmet Uysal, "Mısır'ın Libya'ya Askeri Müdahale İmkânı Var mı?", *ORSAM*, 22 June 2020.

strategic interests and interventions of other regional and global actors. For instance, during this period, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia aligned with Egypt's policy of supporting Haftar to limit Türkiye's influence in Libya.¹⁸ Similarly, France provided military and diplomatic support to Haftar, contributing to the formation of an international front aimed at countering Türkiye's support for the GNA.¹⁹ Russia, seeking to protect its interests in Libya, further complicated the situation by sending mercenaries and military advisors to Haftar's forces.²⁰ The United States initially adopted a neutral stance in Libya's conflict but later shifted towards balancing Türkiye's role in Libya, especially as Türkiye's influence in the region grew. These international dynamics have transformed the Libyan crisis into not just a civil war but also an arena for great power rivalry and regional power struggles.

The Libyan crisis has intensified the competition between Türkiye and Egypt and heightened tensions in their diplomatic relations. Türkiye's increased military presence in Libya and Egypt's ongoing support for Haftar have drawn the two coun-

tries into an indirect conflict in Libya. This situation has complicated the regional military balance and the broader power struggle. These opposing positions in Libya have not only affected bilateral relations between Türkiye and Egypt but have also influenced broader strategic interests, including maritime boundaries, energy security, and regional stability in the Eastern Mediterranean. As a result, the Libyan crisis has deepened the trust deficit between Türkiye and Egypt, with both countries developing strategies to maintain their strategic positions in Libya and limit the influence of their rivals. This rivalry also presents a key challenge to the current diplomatic normalisation process between the two countries.

Despite Türkiye's attempts to engage with all factions in Libya, the Libyan crisis remains one of the most prominent arenas where regional competition between Türkiye and Egypt continues to intensify. The two countries' support for different local actors has exacerbated military and diplomatic tensions in the region, influencing regional security dynamics. This situation will remain a critical element in the future of Türkiye-Egypt

Libya, an international crisis, has become not only a civil war but also an arena of great power competition and regional power struggle.

18 Mücahit Aydemir, "Haftar'ı Silahlandırmak İçin Servet Harcayan Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri Libya'da İstedğini Elde Edemedi", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 20 May 2020.

19 Yusuf Özcan ve Enes Canlı, "Fransa, Libya'da Ekonomik ve Jeopolitik Emellerini Darbeci Haftar ile Korumanın Peşinde", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 1 July 2020.

20 "Rusya'dan Haftar'e 'Paralı Asker' Desteđi: 'Suriye'de Eğitilen 450 Savaşçı Libya'ya Gönderildi", *Euro News*, 26 May 2020.

relations, shaping both countries' efforts to safeguard their strategic interests in the region. Developments in Libya will also directly impact the strategic calculations of other regional and international actors, meaning the Libyan crisis will continue to reflect the rivalry between Türkiye and Egypt and remain one of the main factors shaping the future of their diplomatic relations.

The strategy and security dimension of Türkiye-Egypt relations is multilayered due to both countries' potential to influence geopolitical balances in the Middle East and Africa. Developments over the past 15 years highlight the fundamental dynamics and turning points in these relations. From the political changes triggered by the Arab uprisings to the Libyan crisis and the energy competition in the Eastern Mediterranean, various factors have shaped the course of Türkiye-Egypt relations. Both countries have developed partnerships with different local and international actors in their efforts to protect their strategic interests and regional influence. Türkiye's efforts to strengthen its claims over maritime jurisdiction and energy resources within the framework of its "Blue Homeland" doctrine have clashed with Egypt's alliances, such as its participation in the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum. In Libya, both countries continue to engage in a competition that impacts the regional balance of power as they support opposing factions.

In conclusion, the strategy and security dimension of Türkiye-Egypt relations presents a dynamic structure that includes both competition and opportunities for cooperation. Overcoming the existing tensions and entering a normalisation process in relations is of great importance for regional stability and security.

However, for this process to succeed, mutual trust must be built, solutions must be sought within the framework of international law, and a regional cooperation-based approach must be adopted. The future construction of a balanced relationship that supports both Türkiye and Egypt's strategic interests and contributes to regional peace will depend on the development of a strategy that aligns both countries with regional and international actors. In this context, the official visit of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to Türkiye on September 4, 2024, can be seen as an important step toward fostering dialogue and increasing diplomatic efforts, paving the way for the transformation of competition into constructive cooperation.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

The discovery of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean has increased cooperation opportunities among regional countries while simultaneously introducing a new area of competition. Türkiye and Egypt have found themselves at odds in this process regarding the delineation of maritime jurisdiction areas and the sharing of energy resources. At the centre of these disputes lies Türkiye's determination to defend its maritime rights and interests. Türkiye's strategic approach focuses on protecting maritime jurisdiction areas, the continental shelf, and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) rights in the Aegean, Black Sea, and Eastern Mediterranean, safeguarding sovereignty over these areas. In this framework, Türkiye's claims to energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean are shaped by this broader strategy.²¹

Türkiye's approach materialised through the maritime boundary delimitation agree-

21 Cihat Yaycı, *Mavi Vatan: Bir Harita ve Bir Doktrin Kitabı* "Türkiye'nin Denizlerdeki Misak-ı Milli'si", İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2022.

ment signed with Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA) in 2019. This agreement is one of Türkiye's key strategic moves to expand its maritime borders in the Eastern Mediterranean and secure access to energy resources in the region.²² However, this step was viewed by other regional countries, such as Egypt, Greece, and the Greek Cypriot Administration (GCA), as a violation of international law, leading to countermeasures. In particular, Egypt intensified cooperation with Greece and the GCA, working to counterbalance Türkiye's claims under this strategic framework.²³

This geopolitical competition in the Eastern Mediterranean deepened the disputes between Türkiye and Egypt over maritime jurisdiction areas. In 2020, Egypt responded to Türkiye's agreement with Libya by signing a maritime boundary delimitation agreement with Greece, challenging Türkiye's move and affecting the balance of power in the Eastern Mediterranean.²⁴ In response, Türkiye continued to assert its rights and interests by actively deploying naval forces and seismic research vessels in the region.²⁵ This situation escalated competition over maritime security and energy resources into both military and diplomatic dimensions.

Türkiye's approach is not limited to securing energy resources but also encompasses a broader policy aimed at safeguarding its geopolitical and strategic interests at sea. Türkiye

advocates for a fair distribution of maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean and argues that international law should guide the resolution of disputes. Türkiye's policy also involves closely monitoring the actions of other actors in the region regarding energy resources and maritime rights, taking countermeasures when necessary.²⁶

In this geopolitical context, Egypt's creation of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum alongside Israel, Greece, and the GCA was perceived by Türkiye as a structure that threatened its access to energy resources and strategic position in the region. Türkiye's exclusion from the forum deepened its diplomatic isolation in the region, prompting a more proactive foreign policy. As part of this strategy, Türkiye strengthened its cooperation with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbon reserves and increased its military presence in the region.²⁷

In conclusion, the discovery of energy resources and the ensuing competition over their distribution have further complicated the geopolitical equation between Türkiye and Egypt in the Eastern Mediterranean. Türkiye's actions in the region aim to strengthen its claims to energy and maritime rights, while Egypt's alliances with other regional actors have intensified this competition. These dynamics continue to shape the strategic bal-

22 Muhammet Tarhan ve Behlül Çetinkaya, "Türkiye-Libya Deniz Yetki Anlaşması, Her İki Ülkenin Egemenlik Haklarını Korudu", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 26 November 2022.

23 Dr. İlhan Sağsen, "Türkiye-Libya Anlaşması: Doğu Akdeniz'de Jeopolitik Denklem Değişiyor", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 2 December 2019.

24 Büşranur Begçeçanlı, "Yunanistan-Mısır Anlaşması 'Türkiye'nin Yetki Alanlarına Tecavüz' Olarak Değerlendiriliyor", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 10 August 2020.

25 Ece Göksedef, Doğu Akdeniz: Oruç Reis ve NAVTEX'ler, Türkiye-Yunanistan gerginliğinde nasıl rol oynadı?, *BBC News Türkçe*, 13 October 2020.

26 "Mavi Vatan'daki Haklarımızı Sonuna Kadar Koruyacağız", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı*, 31 August 2024.

27 "Doğu Akdeniz'de Ülkemizin ve KKTC'nin Adil Bir Şekilde Yer Almadığı Hiçbir Denklem Barış ve İstikrar Üretmez", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı*, 15 November 2020.

ance in the Eastern Mediterranean, and Türkiye and Egypt's future diplomatic and military actions will significantly impact regional stability and cooperation. For Türkiye and Egypt

to cooperate in this challenging geopolitical environment, they will need to build mutual trust and pursue solutions within the framework of international law.

DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSION



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Hakan Fidan, is in Egypt.

Current Türkiye-Egypt relations are being reshaped within the framework of recent diplomatic openings, regional policies, and cooperation in international organisations. Following the tensions experienced in the post-Arab uprisings period, both countries have sought to revive diplomatic relations and seize cooperation opportunities. In this process, diplomatic normalisation, regional cooperation areas, and multilateral diplomacy efforts have come to the forefront. Indeed, the diplomatic openings and dialogue channels between Türkiye and Egypt were shaped by steps taken in 2021 to end the long-standing diplomatic coldness between the two countries. This process, marked by the resumption of diplomatic contacts that had been severed after the 2013 military coup in Egypt, is considered a significant turning point toward rebuilding mutual trust. The normalisation of relations between Türkiye and Egypt gained momentum as both countries recognised

their strategic interests and expressed a desire to explore regional cooperation potential.

The year 2021 marked a significant diplomatic turning point in Türkiye-Egypt relations. Diplomatic contacts between the two countries began to revive after nearly eight years of tension, with numerous exploratory talks taking place during this period. The exploratory talks between the foreign ministries of Türkiye and Egypt in 2021²⁸ laid the groundwork for the normalisation process. The primary aim of these discussions was to address existing issues, rebuild mutual trust, and take concrete steps toward normalising relations. During this process, Türkiye took into account Egypt's concerns about sensitive regional issues such as the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya, while Egypt considered Türkiye's security and strategic interests. Over time, these diplomatic contacts expanded to include higher-level officials, and both sides demonstrated a strong commitment to the normalisation of relations.

28 "Türkiye-Mısır İstikşafı İstışareleri Hk. Ortak Açıklama", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışışleri Bakanlıđı*.

The year 2023 saw concrete steps in the normalisation of relations between Türkiye and Egypt. In this context, both countries decided to appoint ambassadors, which was regarded as a tangible sign of the diplomatic openings.²⁹ The appointment of ambassadors not only reinstated diplomatic representation but also laid a foundation for advancing bilateral relations and expanding opportunities for regional cooperation. Additionally, the aid provided by Egypt following the earthquake that struck Türkiye in February 2023, along with the visit by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry³⁰, played a fundamental role in accelerating the normalisation process between the two countries.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Egypt in February 2024³¹, as well as Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan's visits to Cairo in October 2023³² and August 2024³³, provided new momentum to the normalisation process. Erdoğan's visit held critical importance, both for deepening diplomatic relations between the two countries and for exploring cooperation opportunities on regional issues. During this visit, groundwork was laid for cooperation agreements in areas such as energy collaboration, trade, security, and counterterrorism, and it was observed that both countries sought to develop a shared perspective on promoting regional peace and stability. The frequent contacts between the foreign ministers of Türkiye and Egypt also played a significant role in this process. Regular meetings between the foreign ministers to discuss various regional and global issues demonstrat-

ed the potential for the two countries to act together on the regional and international stage. In particular, the ability to find common ground on issues such as the Eastern Mediterranean, Libya, and Palestine reflects the desire of both countries to deepen diplomatic dialogue and cooperation.

The diplomatic openings and dialogue channels between Türkiye and Egypt are critically important for evaluating regional cooperation opportunities. Both countries are directly affected by geopolitical developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Middle East and play a crucial role in maintaining stability in these regions. In this context, Türkiye and Egypt have the potential to cooperate in areas such as energy security, maritime jurisdiction, counterterrorism, and trade, based on their mutual interests. For example, energy cooperation, particularly regarding the sharing of natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean and the transportation of these resources to international markets, emerges as an area that could serve the common interests of both countries. Türkiye and Egypt can develop a shared perspective on the equitable distribution of energy resources in the region and their management in accordance with international law. Additionally, finding common ground in efforts to stabilise Libya, a country that has affected both Türkiye and Egypt, holds strategic importance for the stability of the Sahel and Northeast Africa regions.

29 Ferdi Bayat, "Türkiye ve Mısır'ın Karşılıklı Büyükelçi Atama Süreci Tamamlandı", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 23 July 2023.

30 "Mısır Dışişleri Bakanı Şükrü, 10 Yıl Sonra Türkiye'de: Normalleşme Süreci Hızlanacak mı?", *BBC News Türkçe*, 28 February 2023.

31 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan Mısır'da", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı*, 14 February 2024.

32 "Dışişleri Bakanı Sayın Hakan Fidan'ın Mısır Dışişleri Bakanı Sameh Shoukry ile Ortak Basın Toplantısı", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dışişleri Bakanlığı*, 14 October 2023.

33 "Dışişleri Bakanı Fidan Mısır'da", *TRT Haber*, 4 August 2024.

The diplomatic openings between Türkiye and Egypt signal the potential for relations to deepen further in the future. However, for this process to succeed, certain challenges and obstacles will need to be overcome. In particular, on sensitive issues such as maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean and the conflicts in Libya, both countries must make mutual concessions and maintain constructive dialogue. Furthermore, the influence of other regional actors and international powers will be a direct factor affecting the trajectory of relations between Türkiye and Egypt. Therefore, the diplomatic openings and dialogue channels between Türkiye and Egypt are seen as a critical turning point not only for the normalisation of bilateral relations but also for increasing regional cooperation opportunities. Cooperation between the two countries, guided by their strategic interests and the rebuilding of mutual trust, could contribute to a more stable and peaceful future in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean. Maintaining diplomatic dialogue and developing concrete cooperation projects will strengthen the future of Türkiye-Egypt relations, and this cooperation will also contribute to the stability of regions such as Gaza, the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, and the Sahel.

THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE AS AN AREA OF COOPERATION

Türkiye-Egypt relations hold significant depth and breadth in terms of regional issues and the potential for cooperation on international platforms. The Palestinian issue, in particular, occupies an important place in the foreign policies of both countries and serves as common ground in their quest for peace and stability in the region. As two key powers in the region, Türkiye and Egypt have the capacity to cooperate bilaterally and within multilateral diplomacy platforms. In this context, regional and international cooperation opportunities may play a decisive role in shaping the future of relations between the two countries.

The Palestinian issue holds historical and strategic importance in the foreign policies of both Türkiye and Egypt. Both countries defend the rights of the Palestinian people and emphasise the need for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts between Israel and Palestine. Türkiye provides strong support for the Palestinian cause and frequently criticises Israel's actions in the occupied Palestinian territories. Egypt, due to its geographical proximity and historical ties, plays a critical role in the Palestinian issue and is a prominent voice within the Arab

Finding common ground in efforts to stabilise Libya, a country that has affected both Türkiye and Egypt, holds strategic importance for the stability of the Sahel and Northeast Africa regions.

In particular, coordinated efforts by Türkiye and Egypt in securing ceasefires during Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, increasing humanitarian aid, and reconstructing Gaza could contribute to peace and stability in the region.

League on this matter. Particularly with its border with the Gaza Strip, Egypt plays an active role in humanitarian aid efforts and border security. In this regard, Egypt's stance on the Palestinian issue creates a potential area of cooperation with Türkiye, given their similar positions. For example, during the Israel-Gaza war of October 7, 2023, both Türkiye and Egypt called for a ceasefire and worked to establish dialogue channels between Gaza-based groups and Israel.³⁴ The coordinated diplomatic effort shown by Türkiye and Egypt during this period increased their potential for cooperation and demonstrated their ability to act jointly on regional issues.

While Egypt has long been an advocate for the Palestinian cause within the Arab League, Türkiye has also actively pursued diplomatic efforts on this issue. Supporting the Palestinian cause within the Arab League and presenting a united front against Israel's policies toward Palestinians are important for developing a common perspective on regional issues between Türkiye and Egypt. In this context, Türkiye's humanitarian aid and diplomatic efforts toward Palestine may be positively received by Egypt, potentially increasing cooperation opportunities between the two countries. In particular,

coordinated efforts by Türkiye and Egypt in securing ceasefires during Israeli-Palestinian conflicts, increasing humanitarian aid, and reconstructing Gaza could contribute to peace and stability in the region.

Moreover, Türkiye and Egypt stand out as two countries with the potential to develop common positions and support regional stability within international platforms such as the United Nations (UN). There are opportunities for both countries to adopt joint stances on regional issues such as the Palestinian issue, the Syrian crisis, and efforts to secure peace and stability in Libya, particularly in the UN General Assembly and Security Council. Additionally, in addressing global challenges such as sustainable development goals, climate change, counterterrorism, and refugee crises, Türkiye and Egypt could develop joint initiatives, enhancing their influence on the international stage. Therefore, Türkiye and Egypt both support UN resolutions aimed at recognising Palestine as a state, protecting Palestinian rights, and ensuring Israel's compliance with international law, reflecting their shared sensitivity to the Palestinian issue and their pursuit of peaceful solutions. Furthermore, cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt on platforms such as the UN's

³⁴ Kaan Devocioğlu, "İsrail-Filistin Çatışmasına Kuzey Afrika Ülkelerinin Yaklaşımı ve Türkiye", *ORSAM*, 15 October 2023.

Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission would contribute to regional peace and security.

Another key international platform where Türkiye and Egypt could collaborate is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The OIC was established to present a united stance on issues facing the Islamic world and to defend the rights of Muslim communities. The Palestinian issue remains one of the OIC's most important agenda items, and joint efforts by Türkiye and Egypt within this platform could strengthen the defence of the Palestinian cause in the Islamic world. Additionally, offering peaceful solutions to the problems faced by the Muslim world under the OIC's framework would increase the international influence of both countries. Therefore, adopting a common stance on Palestine within the OIC and issuing joint statements against Israel's violations would reinforce Türkiye and Egypt's support for the Palestinian cause. There is also potential for developing joint policies on other regional and global issues, such as the Syrian crisis, the conflicts in Yemen, and the situation of Rohingya Muslims, under the OIC framework.

In conclusion, the potential for cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt can be deepened in alignment with common interests on the Palestinian issue and other regional matters. However, various challenges and obstacles must also be considered in this process. Issues such as maritime jurisdiction areas in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Libyan crisis, and the competition for leadership in the Arab world could complicate efforts for cooperation between the two countries. To overcome these challenges, both countries must keep diplomatic channels open and continue dialogue and negotiation processes. Similarly,

developing joint positions within international organisations and multilateral diplomacy platforms will strengthen the positions of Türkiye and Egypt as regional and global actors. However, for this cooperation to be sustainable, mutual trust must be built, and existing challenges must be addressed through diplomatic means.

A CHALLENGING EQUATION: THE HORN OF AFRICA AND THE RED SEA

In Türkiye-Egypt relations, the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region have recently come to the forefront due to increasing dynamics of competition and cooperation. The strategic balance in the region has become a more complex equation, especially with current developments such as Ethiopia's issues surrounding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), Ethiopia's signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Somaliland, Somalia's security and military agreement with Egypt, and the subsequent deployment of 10,000 Egyptian troops to Somalia.³⁵ These developments have not only increased opportunities for competition and cooperation for both Türkiye and Egypt in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea but have also led to a reshaping of the balance of power in the region.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), the largest dam built by Ethiopia on the Nile River, has been a major source of tension between Egypt and Ethiopia. Egypt views the control of the Nile's water resources as a strategic security issue. Cairo argues that the dam poses a threat to Egypt's water security and has been striving to reach an agreement with Addis Ababa through diplomatic and technical negotiations. However,

35 "Egypt Deploys Troops, Weapons in Somalia, Raising Tensions in the Horn of Africa", *FDD*, 31 August 2024.

Türkiye is conducting a facilitation initiative called the "Ankara Process" to balance the competition in the Horn of Africa and contribute to resolving tensions in the region.

Ethiopia's acceleration of the dam's filling process and its efforts to increase control over water resources have deepened Egypt's concerns. In this context, Egypt has developed strategies to diplomatically isolate Ethiopia and limit its influence in the region.³⁶ The security and military agreement with Somalia and the deployment of 10,000 Egyptian troops to Somalia represent a strategic move by Egypt against Ethiopia. This military deployment can be interpreted as Egypt's attempt to strengthen its military presence in the Horn of Africa and encircle Ethiopia.

Somalia holds strategic importance for both Egypt and Ethiopia. Egypt's security and military agreement with Somalia, resulting in the deployment of 10,000 Egyptian troops, has sparked a reaction from Ethiopia. In response, Ethiopia has deployed military forces to the Somali border.³⁷ These military deployments complicate the security dynamics in the region and increase tensions between Ethiopia and Egypt, potentially leading to a conflict centred around Somalia. Additionally, with the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) set to close at the end of 2024, the withdrawal

of Ethiopian forces from Somalia and the deployment of 5,000 Egyptian troops under the newly established African Union Somalia Support Mission (AUSSOM)³⁸ will reshape the balance of power in the region. This move by Egypt can be seen as an effort to increase its influence in Somalia and establish a strategic balance against Ethiopia.

In response to these developments, Türkiye is conducting a facilitation initiative called the "Ankara Process" to balance the competition in the Horn of Africa and contribute to resolving tensions in the region. Türkiye's role in this process has gained importance due to its strong diplomatic and economic relations with both Ethiopia and Somalia. The third meeting of the process, scheduled to take place in Ankara on September 17, is seen as a critical step in continuing the process and finding peaceful solutions to regional disputes. The «Ankara Process» is part of Türkiye's efforts to increase its diplomatic influence in the Horn of Africa and prevent conflicts in the region. Türkiye's initiative also aligns with international efforts to ensure stability in the Red Sea basin. By contributing to resolving disputes between Ethiopia

36 Kaan Devecioğlu, "Büyük Etiyopya Rönesans Barajı Çıkmazı: Sudan ve Mısır Yakınlaşması", *ORSAM*, 15 March 2021.

37 Ian Wafula, "Why Ethiopia is so Alarmed by an Egypt-Somalia Alliance", *BBC News*, 30 August 2024.

38 "Egypt and Somalia's Military Agreement Alarms Ethiopia", *Agenzia Fides*, 30 August 2024.

and Somalia, Türkiye positions itself as a balancing actor aiming to preserve peace and stability in the region.

In this regard, there are areas of both competition and cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. The first notable aspect of the competition is Egypt's deployment of troops to Somalia and Ethiopia's subsequent military deployment on the Somali border, an important development that also affects Türkiye's strategic interests in the region. Türkiye, with its strong military and economic presence in Somalia, aims to maintain its influence in the region, while Egypt's military moves escalate the level of competition. Secondly, Egypt's hardline stance against Ethiopia over the GERD issue and Addis Ababa's refusal to compromise on water security complicate Türkiye's diplomatic balancing role in the region. Türkiye's maintenance of good relations with both Egypt and Ethiopia and its contribution to resolving the Ethiopia-Somalia dispute through the "Ankara Process" could create a conducive environment for managing the GERD crisis between Cairo and Addis Ababa.

On the other hand, Türkiye and Egypt have the potential to cooperate to maintain peace and stability in the region. Participating in joint peace and security missions within the frameworks of the African Union and the

United Nations could strengthen both countries' influence in the region and turn competition into cooperation. Additionally, there is potential for cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt on maritime security, counter-piracy, and counter-terrorism efforts in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. Securing the maritime routes in the region is crucial for both Türkiye and Egypt in protecting their regional and global trade interests. In this context, while Egypt seeks to ensure security in the region through direct military presence and control, Türkiye aims to contribute to maritime security through more flexible and diplomatic methods, increasing cooperation with regional countries. These complementary strategies could lead to a cooperative stance between the two countries in securing the maritime routes in the Red Sea and protecting sea trade. Furthermore, Türkiye and Egypt could explore economic cooperation opportunities related to ports and trade routes in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. Developing joint projects on the development of strategic ports and ensuring the security of trade corridors along the Red Sea could support the economic interests of both countries.

When evaluating the dynamics of competition and cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea in light of current develop-

Egypt's hardline stance against Ethiopia over the GERD issue and Addis Ababa's refusal to compromise on water security complicate Türkiye's diplomatic balancing role in the region. Türkiye's maintenance of good relations with both Egypt and Ethiopia and its contribution to resolving the Ethiopia-Somalia dispute through the "Ankara Process" could create a conducive environment for managing the GERD crisis between Cairo and Addis Ababa.

ments and future scenarios, the picture becomes quite complex. Türkiye's "Ankara Process" initiative provides an important platform for contributing to the resolution of regional disputes and preventing potential conflicts. Türkiye's facilitative role in this process allows it to maintain a balanced diplomatic relationship with both Egypt and Ethiopia. The official visit of Egyptian President Sisi to Ankara on September 4 is also seen as the beginning of a new era in Türkiye-Egypt relations. This visit is a significant diplomatic step toward increasing cooperation opportunities on regional issues and managing competition in the Horn of Africa.

In conclusion, the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea are strategic regions with high potential for both competition and cooperation in Türkiye-Egypt relations. While Türkiye plays an important diplomatic role in promoting peace and stability in the region through the "Ankara Process," Egypt is taking steps to increase its military presence and strategic influence. These dynamics will be decisive in shaping future relations between Türkiye and Egypt in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea. If the two countries can transform competition into cooperation and pursue policies that support peace and stability based on mutual interests, they could achieve significant gains both regionally and internationally.

THE CIVIL WAR IN THE SHADOWS: SUDAN

The humanitarian crisis and civil war in Sudan, which has been overshadowed by the Israel-Gaza conflict, is a critical area that offers opportunities for cooperation, particularly in the context of international politics and relations between Türkiye and Egypt. Sudan,

a country with strategic and historical ties to both Türkiye and Egypt, presents the potential for these two nations to develop joint efforts to resolve the conflict and mitigate the humanitarian crisis.

Since the overthrow of Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, Sudan has faced a deep humanitarian crisis, further exacerbated by the outbreak of civil war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023³⁹. This conflict has resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians, the displacement of millions, and severe damage to critical infrastructure across the country. The civil war in Sudan not only affects internal dynamics but also has a significant impact on regional stability and relations with neighbouring countries. The crisis has drawn the attention of both Türkiye and Egypt, as well as the international community, which continues to support efforts for a resolution⁴⁰. In this context, Türkiye and Egypt have potential areas for cooperation to address the conflict and the humanitarian crisis in Sudan.

Türkiye has strong historical and cultural ties with Sudan and has deepened its relations with the country in recent years through economic, commercial, and humanitarian efforts. Türkiye has taken an active diplomatic role in seeking to resolve the humanitarian crisis in Sudan and to end the conflict. Currently, Turkish aid organisations such as AFAD and the Turkish Red Crescent are conducting large-scale humanitarian operations in Sudan, while TİKA implements health, education, and infrastructure projects in various regions of the country. Moreover, Türkiye supports political efforts towards a peaceful resolution and has engaged in diplomatic initiatives aimed at ensuring the peaceful completion of the tran-

39 Kaan Devocioğlu, "Sudan Krizinde Yeni Boyut: Ordu ve Hızlı Destek Kuvvetleri Arasında Çatışma", *ORSAM*, 30 April 2024.

40 Kaan Devocioğlu, "Gölgede Kalan İç Savaş: Sudan", *ORSAM*, 1 July 2024.

sition process in Sudan. Türkiye's diplomatic efforts to resolve the civil war in Sudan increase the potential for cooperation with other regional actors, particularly Egypt. Türkiye has coordinated with the international community in its efforts to resolve the conflict and could collaborate with Egypt in joint initiatives and humanitarian operations to address the crisis.

For Egypt, Sudan is a critical country due to its strategic position on the Nile River and its role in regional security dynamics. Instability in Sudan poses a direct national security threat to Egypt, particularly concerning the management of Nile water resources and the influx of refugees into the region. Egypt supports the role of military elements in Sudan's transitional process and seeks the completion of the political transition in a manner that contributes to regional security and stability.⁴¹ Egypt's efforts to resolve the conflict in Sudan have been shaped by diplomatic initiatives and humanitarian operations, particularly within the frameworks of the African Union and the Arab League. Egypt has provided assistance to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Sudan through various aid organisations, supplying materials and support to those in need.⁴² More-

over, Egypt continues to call for regional and international cooperation to ensure peace and stability in Sudan.

In this context, Türkiye and Egypt could initiate joint humanitarian aid efforts and coordinate their responses to Sudan's humanitarian crisis. In areas such as healthcare, food assistance, access to clean water, and the improvement of refugee camps, the two countries could collaborate to alleviate the humanitarian situation in Sudan. Joint humanitarian operations through institutions like the Turkish Red Crescent and the Egyptian Red Crescent could enhance the potential for cooperation between the two nations.

Moreover, Türkiye and Egypt could unite their diplomatic efforts to resolve the civil war in Sudan and contribute to the peace process in the region. Joint diplomatic initiatives aimed at ending the conflict could be pursued within the frameworks of the African Union, the United Nations, and the Arab League. Türkiye's diplomatic efforts within the 'Ankara Process' aimed at resolving the disputes between Somalia and Ethiopia could be broadened to address Egypt's regional security concerns and contribute to stability in Sudan.

Türkiye's diplomatic efforts within the 'Ankara Process' aimed at resolving the disputes between Somalia and Ethiopia could be broadened to address Egypt's regional security concerns and contribute to stability in Sudan.

41 Kaan Deveciođlu, "Türkiye-Sudan Relations in Post-Bashir Era" *Journal of Middle Eastern Studies/Ortadođu Etütleri*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2023.

42 Sara Creta, Nour Khalil, "Exclusive: Inside Egypt's Secret Scheme to Detain and Deport Thousands of Sudanese Refugees", *The New Humanitarian*, 25 April 2024.

Achieving peace and security in Sudan is critical for the regional security interests of both Türkiye and Egypt. The two nations could develop joint security cooperation projects aimed at ending the conflict and restoring stability in Sudan. In this context, joint security and development programs could be established to support the transition process and the reconstruction of the country, particularly in areas such as border security, counterterrorism, and managing the refugee crisis. These cooperative efforts could serve as important steps towards ensuring peace and stability in Sudan.

In conclusion, the humanitarian crisis and civil war in Sudan stand out as critical areas of cooperation in Türkiye-Egypt relations. Both

countries have potential areas of cooperation in resolving the conflict and mitigating the humanitarian crisis in Sudan. However, for this process to be successful, both Türkiye and Egypt must take into account their differing strategic interests in Sudan and the regional dynamics and work towards constructive collaboration. Joint humanitarian operations, diplomatic initiatives, and security cooperation projects could play a significant role in restoring peace and stability in Sudan. Nonetheless, further dialogue and diplomatic efforts are necessary for both countries. In this regard, the alignment of Türkiye and Egypt's common interests in resolving the conflict and addressing the humanitarian crisis in Sudan could make significant contributions to regional peace and stability.

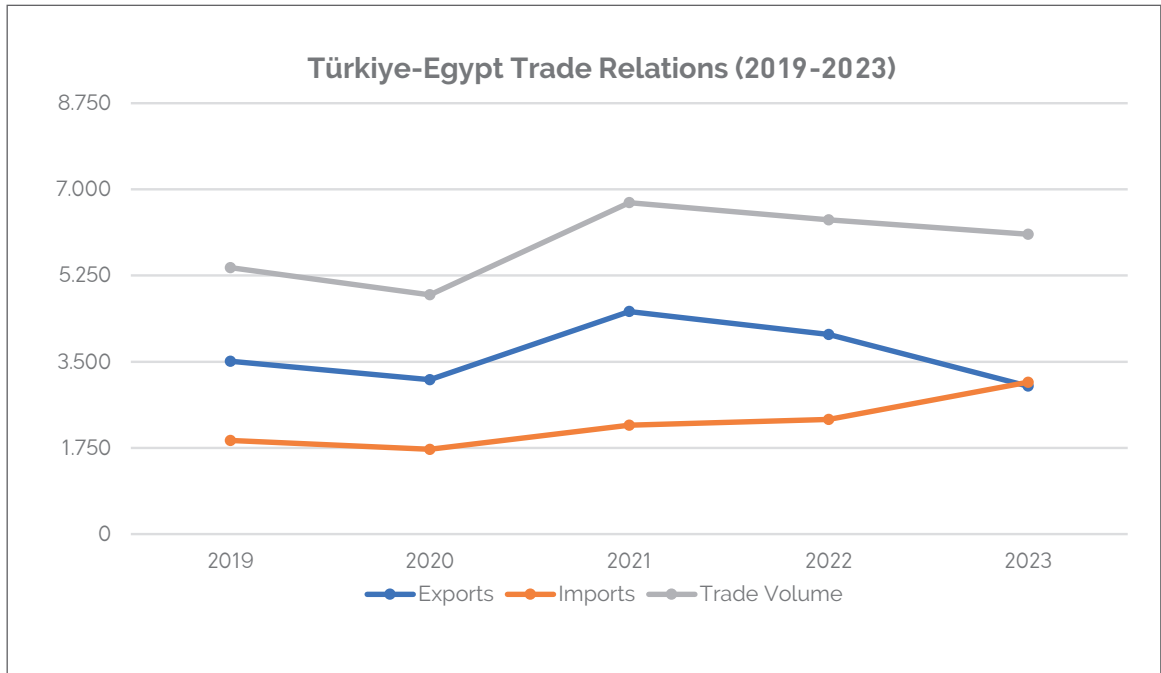
ECONOMIC AND TRADE DIMENSION



The economic and trade relations between Türkiye and Egypt have gained remarkable momentum in recent years, marked by a rapidly increasing trade volume and mutual investments, going beyond their historical ties. The economic and trade partnerships between the two countries have not only strengthened their strategic positions regionally but also increased their competitive power in the global economic arena. The development of trade between Türkiye and Egypt is reflected in the deepening cooperation across various sectors that support economic growth and employment in both countries. In this context, the increasing mutual economic interdependence has contributed to making both countries key partners in regional economics and trade. In the future, new cooperation opportunities in energy, infrastructure, tourism, and service sectors could further deepen economic relations between Türkiye and Egypt and enable the development of a sustainable growth model.

Economic and trade relations between Türkiye and Egypt have gained significant momentum in recent years, with cooperation opportunities steadily diversifying. The increase in trade volume, mutual investments, and private sector partnerships has contributed to making Türkiye and Egypt important partners in regional economics and trade. This dynamic plays a critical role not only in fostering economic growth and employment but also in strengthening diplomatic relations and deepening regional cooperation between the two countries.

In recent years, the trade volume between Türkiye and Egypt has seen a significant increase. According to TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) data, the trade volume between the two countries reached approximately \$5 billion as of 2020, and by 2023, this figure had risen to \$6 billion. This growth reflects the determination of both countries to expand and deepen their economic relations. Türkiye's main exports to Egypt include textiles,



Source: TÜİK

iron and steel, chemical products, electronics, and automotive parts. Türkiye holds a significant share of Egypt's imports, particularly as a key supplier of raw materials and intermediate goods for the industrial and construction sectors.

On the other hand, Egypt exports primarily chemical products, plastics, cotton, and various agricultural goods to Türkiye. Egypt aims to increase its exports to Türkiye, particularly in the agriculture and chemical sectors, to enhance its competitiveness. Cotton and agricultural products hold a significant place in Egypt's exports to Türkiye, serving as raw materials for Türkiye's textile and food industries. These trade dynamics are based on the complementary nature of the two countries' economic structures.

The growth of trade relations between Türkiye and Egypt is further deepened through

private sector partnerships and mutual investments. Turkish and Egyptian private sectors continue to explore opportunities for cooperation and investment in various fields. Türkiye has made investments in Egypt, particularly in the textile, construction, energy, and food sectors. Turkish textile companies utilise Egypt's cost-effective labour and strategic location as a production hub, providing access to African and Middle Eastern markets.⁴³ Major Turkish retailers such as LC Waikiki and Defacto have expanded their production and distribution networks in Egypt, strengthening their presence in the region.⁴⁴

Construction and infrastructure projects also present significant investment opportunities for Turkish companies in Egypt. Turkish construction firms play an active role in major infrastructure projects in Egypt, especially in housing, commercial buildings, and energy

43 Emirhan Yılmaz, "Türkiye'nin Afrika'ya İhracatında Mısır Ön Planda", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 14 April 2024.

44 Muhammet Fatih Kabasakal, "DeFacto Mısır'da 32'inci Mağazasını Açtı", *Anadolu Ajansı*, 27 May 2024.

facilities. Additionally, Türkiye's growing investments in Egypt's energy sector contribute to the diversification of economic cooperation between the two countries. Türkiye is showing interest in Egypt's renewable energy projects and exploring cooperation opportunities in this area.⁴⁵

Egyptian companies are also seeking opportunities for collaboration in various sectors in Türkiye. By entering the Turkish market, particularly in the textile, chemical, and food sectors, Egyptian firms aim to gain a competitive advantage in Türkiye's large domestic market. Moreover, Egypt's exports of food products and agricultural raw materials play an important role in Türkiye's industrial and food processing sectors. These collaborations present significant opportunities for economic growth and job creation for both countries.⁴⁶

Economic cooperation and investment agreements that encourage mutual investments have played a key role in the development of economic relations between Türkiye and Egypt. In 2005, Türkiye and Egypt signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which contributed to the liberalisation of bilateral trade and the growth of investments.⁴⁷ This agreement increased the trade volume between Türkiye and Egypt and facilitated further trade liberalisation by reducing customs duties. These economic cooperation agreements have enabled the sustainable growth of trade and investments between the two countries. Türkiye and Egypt also organise various economic forums and investment summits aimed at increasing mutual investments in strategic sectors such as energy, infrastructure, and

industry, bringing together private sector representatives from both countries. These events offer important opportunities to further strengthen economic cooperation between the two nations.

Economic and trade relations between Türkiye and Egypt have the potential to deepen further in the future. Both countries can more effectively utilise each other's markets to sustain economic growth and expand regional trade networks. Increasing the trade volume between Türkiye and Egypt can be achieved by exploring new cooperation opportunities, particularly in energy, infrastructure, tourism, and service sectors. For example, the energy sector holds great potential for deepening cooperation between the two countries. Türkiye and Egypt could develop joint projects for the exploration of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and the transportation of these resources to international markets. Cooperation in renewable energy, in particular, could contribute to enhancing the energy security of both countries and supporting their economic growth. Additionally, the tourism sector stands out as another important area for expanding economic relations between Türkiye and Egypt.⁴⁸ The two countries could organise joint promotional campaigns and encourage mutual investments in tourism infrastructure. Such collaborations would help both nations increase their tourism revenues and promote economic growth.

On the other hand, mutual investments hold strategic importance not only in bilateral relations but also on a regional level. Through

45 Genco Uysal, "Türk Yatırımcılar İçin Yıldızı Parlayan Ülke: Mısır", *Sektorum Akıllı İşler Dergisi*, 1 April 2022.

46 "Mısır Ülke Bilgi Notu", *TİM Ekonomik Araştırmalar*, October 2023.

47 "Mısır", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Ticaret Bakanlığı*, 28 September 2023.

48 Hüseyin Özer, "Türkiye Mısır İlişkilerinin İki Ülke Turizmine Etkisi (2010-2017 yılları)", *Yüksek Lisans Tezi Marmara Üniversitesi*, 2020.

its investments in Egypt, Türkiye gains access to the African market, while Egypt, through its investments in Türkiye, can access the markets of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These mutual investment strategies enable both countries to expand their regional trade and investment networks. Regional economic integration efforts also increase the opportunities for cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt. The two countries could develop joint projects with other countries in Africa and the Middle East, strengthening regional trade corridors. Such regional cooperation initiatives could support the economic growth of Türkiye and Egypt while contributing to regional stability and development.

In conclusion, economic and trade relations between Türkiye and Egypt have

made significant progress in recent years, offering strategic and economic benefits for both countries. The stability of trade volume despite diplomatic challenges, along with mutual investments and private sector partnerships, has contributed to deepening and diversifying economic relations between the two countries. In the future, exploring new cooperation opportunities in energy, infrastructure, tourism, and service sectors could further strengthen economic relations between Türkiye and Egypt. The sustainability of this cooperation will depend on maintaining constructive dialogue and developing joint projects based on mutual interests. Thus, economic and trade relations between Türkiye and Egypt could be built on a more stable and robust foundation, both bilaterally and regionally.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Hakan Fidan, held an inter-delegation meeting in Cairo with Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and Egyptians Abroad, Badr Abdelatty.

Türkiye-Egypt relations are characterised by their historical ties, strategic positions, and regional interests, making them multidimensional. These relations, which have fluctuated throughout history, have recently experienced a dynamic process that includes both competition and cooperation. The historical ties inherited from the Ottomans and the diplomatic interactions that have continued since the Republic era form the foundation of the relationship between the two countries. However, tensions following the Arab uprisings and the military coup in Egypt in 2013 increased strategic competition and downgraded diplomatic relations. Nevertheless, the diplomatic steps taken in recent years and the normalisation processes have opened the door to a new era of cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt.

Türkiye-Egypt relations stand out with their strategic, security, and economic dimensions, especially in regions like the Eastern Mediterranean, Libya, Palestine, the Horn of Africa, and the Red Sea. The energy competition in

the Eastern Mediterranean, opposing positions in the Libya crisis, and the search for common ground on the Palestinian issue are among the key factors shaping the regional policies of both countries. On the other hand, the increasing dynamics of competition and cooperation in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea reflect Türkiye and Egypt's efforts to expand their regional influence and strengthen their strategic positions.

The economic and trade relations between the two countries have seen significant progress in recent years, offering strategic and economic benefits to both nations. The increase in trade volume, mutual investments, and private sector collaborations have contributed to making Türkiye and Egypt key partners in regional economics and trade. This cooperation plays a critical role not only in economic growth and job creation but also in strengthening diplomatic relations and deepening regional collaboration.

In conclusion, Türkiye-Egypt relations are dynamic, encompassing both competition

and cooperation. Despite their strategic competition, the two countries have areas where they can collaborate on regional and global issues. This cooperation can play a crucial role in ensuring regional peace and stability. However, for this cooperation to be sustainable, both countries need to build mutual trust and seek solutions based on international law.

From this perspective, four main policy recommendations can be made to ensure the sustainability of Türkiye-Egypt relations:

The first is strengthening diplomatic communication channels and ensuring military dialogue and security cooperation on regional issues as part of confidence-building measures. Türkiye and Egypt should continue the confidence-building process through the appointment of ambassadors and high-level diplomatic contacts. In this context, regular diplomatic consultations and the establishment of joint committees will play an important role in resolving issues and developing areas of cooperation between the two countries. Additionally, the two countries, which face off in strategic regions such as the Eastern Mediterranean and Libya, should take confidence-building measures by establishing military dialogue mechanisms. Joint military exercises, training programs, and security cooperation agreements will support the efforts of both nations to ensure regional security and stability.

Secondly, Türkiye and Egypt should expand and maintain diplomatic dialogue by utilising regional and international cooperation platforms and promoting trade diplomacy. By developing joint positions within international platforms such as the United Nations, the Arab League, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Türkiye and Egypt can support regional stability. Coordinating their diplomacy on issues such as the Palestinian issue,

the Syrian crisis, and the civil war in Sudan will increase the influence of both countries in the international arena. Furthermore, Türkiye and Egypt should organise joint economic forums and business summits to increase economic and trade cooperation. These forums will bring together private sector representatives, allowing for the development of strategies to increase trade and investments. In this context, exploring opportunities for cooperation in energy and infrastructure projects will contribute to the economic growth of both countries.

Thirdly, Türkiye and Egypt should outline a roadmap for a "strategic partnership" in energy cooperation, maritime security, and counter-terrorism efforts. The two countries should develop joint projects for the exploration of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean and the transportation of these resources to international markets. Particularly in the field of renewable energy, cooperation will help both countries enhance their energy security and support their economic growth. Additionally, Türkiye and Egypt have the potential to cooperate on maritime security, counter-piracy, and counter-terrorism efforts in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa. Securing the maritime routes in the region is critical for both Türkiye and Egypt to protect their regional and global trade. In this context, joint naval security exercises and information-sharing mechanisms should be established.

Fourthly, Türkiye and Egypt should develop joint solutions regarding the Sudan crisis. In this regard, the two countries could launch joint humanitarian aid operations and initiate diplomatic efforts for a peace process between conflicting parties. Türkiye and Egypt could cooperate on addressing the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, particularly by working together on health services, food aid, clean water provision, and the improvement of ref-

ugee camps. Additionally, Türkiye and Egypt could combine their diplomatic efforts to resolve the civil war in Sudan and contribute to the peace process in the region. Joint diplomatic initiatives could be launched, especially within the frameworks of the African Union, the United Nations, and the Arab League, to bring an end to the conflicts in Sudan.

In conclusion, the relations between Türkiye and Egypt present a dynamic structure that includes both competition and cooperation. Overcoming the existing tensions between the two countries and entering a process of normalisation in their relations is of great im-

portance for regional stability and security. However, for this process to be successful, mutual trust must be built, solutions must be sought within the framework of international law, and a regional cooperation-based approach must be adopted. The construction of a future in which Türkiye and Egypt can balance their strategic interests and contribute to regional peace depends on the development of a strategy aligned with both regional and international actors. In this context, the beginning of a new era of cooperation between Türkiye and Egypt will provide significant contributions to regional peace and stability.

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