

# THE STRATEGIC EVOLUTION OF TÜRKİYE- SOMALIA RELATIONS IN MARITIME SECURITY

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### THE STRATEGIC EVOLUTION OF TÜRKIYE-SOMALIA RELATIONS IN MARITIME SECURITY

The Horn of Africa is situated at a vital juncture where the Indian Ocean, the Gulf of Aden, and the Red Sea converge, making it one of the world's busiest maritime trade routes. Located at the heart of this region, Somalia boasts the continent's longest coastline, stretching 3,898 km. However, since the central government's authority was significantly weakened in 1991, the country has struggled to effectively control its maritime zones. The lack of adequate coastal security measures has left Somalia's coastline vulnerable to maritime crimes such as illegal fishing, which contributed to the rise of piracy in the Gulf of Aden between 2008 and 2011 and jeopardized international maritime security (Chalk, 2010; World Bank, 2005).

In response to this threat, multilateral operations were launched with the approval of the United Nations Security Council, leading to the deployment of forces such as the European Union's Operation Atalanta and Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) (Geiss & Petrig, 2011). Türkiye became involved in the process at an early stage by contributing its navy to these global initiatives starting in 2008 and operating in the Gulf of Aden under authority continuously renewed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (Siradag, 2022). This participation is seen as the first sign of the enduring and institutionalized nature of Türkiye's policy toward Somalia.

This analytical study examines the maritime security dimension of Türkiye-Somalia relations, which have evolved into a strategic partnership focused on agreements regarding defense, economic frameworks, and hydrocarbon cooperation in 2024 agreements that emphasize the application of maritime law, sovereignty capacity, and the protection of energy assets a partnership that was strengthened by diplomatic efforts following 2011 and formally established with the opening of the Turkish Military Training Center in Mogadishu in 2017 Somalia relations, which have been strengthened by diplomatic efforts since 2011, were formally established with the Turkish Military Training Center in Mogadishu in 2017, and have evolved into a strategic partnership focused on agreements regarding defense, economic frameworks, and hydrocarbon cooperation in 2024, emphasizing "maritime law applications, sovereignty capacity, and the protection of energy assets" (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, undated; Reuters, 2017; Anadolu Agency, 2024). Relations between Türkiye and Somalia have evolved from development-focused cooperation stemming from the severe humanitarian crisis in Somalia in 2011 into a complex strategic alliance encompassing security, defense, and economic dimensions (Aydın, 2022; Özkan, 2024). A key turning point in this progression was the shift in cooperation from Turkish military operations and field training in Mogadishu to capabilities focused on maritime security (Aydın, 2022; The Soufan Center, 2024).

This analytical study aims to comprehensively examine the period spanning from Türkiye's initial involvement in anti-piracy missions off the coast of Somalia in 2008 to the defense and energy agreements signed in 2024. In this context,

it examines the maritime security dimension of Türkiye-Somalia relations, which have evolved into a strategic partnership focused on the 2024 Defense and Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement and the Hydrocarbon

Cooperation Agreement by exploring the historical roots of coastal security issues in Somalia and Türkiye's transition from providing humanitarian aid to establishing security cooperation.

Türkiye established its military presence in Somalia by deploying three F-16 fighter jets to Mogadishu's Aden Adde International Airport in January 2026 (Middle East Eye, 2026). Carnegie Endowment expert Alper Coşkun characterized this action as a deterrent element, underscoring Türkiye's long-term commitment (Coşkun, 2026). According to Riccardo Gasco, a researcher at the University of Bologna, this situation signifies a "shift from security partnership to force projection and dominance" (Gasco, 2026). The arrival of Turkish warships at the Port of Mogadishu in February 2026 has strengthened the maritime dimension of relations between Türkiye and Somalia.

The primary objective of this analytical study is to examine how the "Framework Agreement on Defense and Economic Cooperation" signed between the Republic of Türkiye and the Federal Republic of Somalia on February 8, 2024, and the "Hydrocarbon Cooperation Agreement" dated February 21, 2024, have transformed the maritime security dimension of Türkiye–Somalia relations and how it has reshaped bilateral dynamics during the 2024–2026 period (Anadolu Agency, 2024; Turkish Grand National Assembly, 2024).

The findings indicate that the partnership extends beyond a purely humanitarian and development perspective, demonstrating that Türkiye is actively playing a significant role as a major power in the Indian Ocean and enabling Somalia to function as a strategic base. This situation not only

strengthens Somalia's sovereignty and economic objectives but also enhances Türkiye's maritime capabilities. However, factors such as the Ethiopia-Somaliland agreement, Israel's planned official recognition of Somaliland in 2025, and competition among Gulf countries carry the potential to create new geopolitical tensions.

### Historical and Institutional Background: From Humanitarian Aid to Military Training

Türkiye and Somalia share a historical relationship dating back to the Ottoman period. During this period, the Ottomans viewed the Somali coast as a strategic location due to its position in the Indian Ocean (Sıradağ, 2018). In the modern era, following the famine and hunger crisis in Somalia in 2011, this relationship evolved with a focus on humanitarian aid. The visit of then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Mogadishu on August 19, 2011, marked a significant turning point that drew considerable international attention. Erdoğan, who traveled to Somalia with his family and four ministers, appealed for aid for Somalia, addressing the entire world (Al Jazeera, 2011). This visit marked the first time in over two decades that a leader from outside Africa had visited the region and triggered Türkiye's \$300 million aid initiative. In his speech at the UN General Assembly, Erdoğan criticized the lack of effective international intervention in Somalia, stating, "Somalia's tragedy is a shame for the world" (UN News, 2011). During this period, Türkiye strengthened its humanitarian aid efforts by establishing six field hospitals in Somalia, constructing a major hospital, and launching infrastructure projects. Trade volume between Türkiye and Somalia rose from

\$5.1 million in 2010 to \$123 million in 2016 (Reuters, 2017).

### **a. The 2011 Somali Humanitarian Crisis and Türkiye's Era of Soft Power**

In 2011, Somalia experienced one of its most severe humanitarian crises. According to United Nations statistics, over 4 million people faced the threat of starvation, and 260,000 people lost their lives (Özkan, 2014, p. 45). This crisis marked a significant turning point in Türkiye's approach to the Horn of Africa and resulted in the provision of over \$1 billion in humanitarian aid to Somalia through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, 2012). Then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's visit to Mogadishu in August 2011 and his speech there, in which he stated that "the world is bigger than five," initiated the process that elevated Türkiye to the status of the first country recognized as a "strategic partner" by the African continent.

Türkiye's efforts to expand its soft power in Somalia include the establishment of the Türkiye-Mogadishu Hospital in Mogadishu, the construction of an orphanage for 10,000 children, and the building of more than 20 schools (TIKA, 2015). During this period, through the joint efforts of TIKA, AFAD, and the Turkish Red Crescent, 500 km of roads and 1,000 km of electrical infrastructure were built, and five ports were restored (Street, 2012, p. 67). In academic discussions, this strategy is characterized as a "humanitarian diplomacy model," and it is noted that it embodies Türkiye's "win-win" approach, distinguishing it from traditional Western strategies in Africa (Özkan & Orçan, 2010, p. 512).

### **b. 2008–2017: Participation of the Turkish Navy in the Gulf of Aden**

In response to the piracy crisis off the coast of Somalia in 2008, Türkiye took action on February 10, 2009, by deploying the frigate TCG Giresun to the Gulf of Aden, Somali territorial waters, and the Arabian Sea, in accordance with a decision (No. 2009/8535) adopted by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. This mission was renewed 15 times between 2008 and 2023, and during this period, the Turkish Navy contributed a total of 12 ships and 2,400 personnel to the NATO Ocean Shield Operation, the EU Atalanta Operation, and CTF-151 (Naval Forces Command, 2023).

During this period, TCG vessels thwarted 225 piracy attempts off the coast of Somalia, destroyed 47 pirate vessels, and arrested 156 pirates, handing them over to international judicial systems (Sıradağ, 2022, p. 397). This success has positioned Türkiye as a "reliable maritime authority" in the Horn of Africa and led to its receiving the "Maritime Security Medal" from the Somali Federal Government in 2012 (Anadolu Agency, 2012).

### **c. 2017: Establishment of the Turkish Military Training Center (TÜRK-SOM)**

On September 30, 2017, a ceremony was held in Mogadishu attended by then-Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo and then-Turkish Defense Minister Fikri Işık to inaugurate the Turkish Armed Forces Training and Advisory Command (TÜRK-SOM) (Reuters, 2017). Capable of accommodating 4,000 Somali soldiers, this facility is Türkiye's first and only permanent military base on the African continent (Daban & Aktaş, 2024, p. 82). From 2017 to 2024, TÜRK-SOM trained 16,000 Somali soldiers, and Turkish Special

Forces personnel, in particular, established the Gorgor Special Forces Battalion from scratch (Habtoor Research, 2025). When Al Jazeera correspondent Nazanine Moshiri visited this base in 2023, she stated, “Somalia’s most disciplined and professional military unit is led by Turkish officers.” “The Gorgor unit is the most capable fighting force in Somalia and has been fully trained by Turkish special forces. This unit carries out night raids and high-value target operations that no other Somali unit has been able to execute” (Al Jazeera, 2023).

Türkiye’s military presence in Mogadishu has increased the institutional capacity of Somali security forces by 300% and facilitated more than 250 successful operations against Al-Shabaab (Daban, C. & Aktaş, H., 2024, *İmgelem Journal*, p. 89).

Gorgor units trained at TURKSOM form the core of the Somali army and assume significant responsibilities in the fight against the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab. Over the course of approximately four years, more than 3,000 Somali soldiers have received training and equipment at this facility (Radio Muqdisho 2021). In addition to military training, Türkiye is also supporting the Somali Police Force by training Haramcad public order units (Yeni Şafak 2025).

Ali Muhammad Omar, Somalia’s Foreign Minister at the time, emphasized the importance of security cooperation, stating, “Türkiye and Somalia are working together to strengthen the security framework in Mogadishu. Türkiye possesses valuable experience in counterterrorism, and we have much to learn from Ankara. Additionally, Türkiye is assisting in the development of the Somali armed forces.”

#### **d. Institutional Transformation: The Shift from TIKA to the Defense Industry**

From 2011 to 2017, 65% of Türkiye’s aid to Somalia was focused on humanitarian assistance, while 25% was allocated to infrastructure projects and 10% to education. After 2018, distribution shifted to 40% for the defense sector, 30% for infrastructure, 20% for education, and 10% for humanitarian aid (SETA, 2022).

“The Turkish Military Training Center provided Somali Army personnel with 1,500 hours of infantry tactics training, 800 hours of special operations training, and 400 hours of intelligence training; this training increased the Somali Army’s combat effectiveness by 450%” (Kaya, M., 2023, YÖK Thesis No.: 789543).

#### **e. The Theoretical Framework for the Transition from Humanitarian Aid to Strategic Partnership**

Within the context of Joseph Nye’s soft power theory, Türkiye’s policy toward Somalia can be analyzed from the perspective of “humanitarian diplomacy → institutional capacity building → strategic partnership” (Nye, 2004, p. 16). This evolution is also consistent with the theory of complex interdependence developed by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, which is based on mutual benefit and long-term institution-building. This framework distinguishes Türkiye’s approach from traditional Western aid paradigms; for Türkiye prioritizes sustainable capacity building and the creation of mutual economic and political interdependence rather than focusing solely on emergency humanitarian aid (Özkan, 2022; Keohane & Nye, 2011).

This approach is also described in the academic literature as the “win-win” paradigm and constitutes the fundamental difference between Türkiye’s Africa policy and that of the West. Özkan (2022) offers the following assessment on this matter: Türkiye’s strategy is built on “mutual interdependence and sustainable partnership” and, unlike traditional Western aid models, transforms the donor-recipient relationship into an equality-based partnership.

### The 2024 Agreement: A New Era in Maritime Security

Relations between Türkiye and Somalia have undergone a significant transformation through comprehensive agreements signed in 2024. What began as humanitarian diplomacy in 2011 and evolved into military training cooperation starting in 2017 has, as of 2024, transformed into a strategic alliance focused on maritime security and the protection of energy resources. This section summarizes the details, scope, and strategic aspects of the agreements signed during the 2024–2026 period. This section summarizes the details, scope, and strategic aspects of the agreements signed during the 2024–2026 period.

#### a. Signing of the Agreement and Its Legal Framework

The “Framework Agreement on Defense and Economic Cooperation Between Türkiye and the Federal Republic of Somalia,” signed in Ankara on February 8, 2024, marks a significant milestone in maritime security relations between the two countries. The agreement, valid for 10 years, was signed by then-Minister of National Defense Yaşar Güler and then-Somali Minister of Defense Abdulkadir

Muhammed Nur. The agreement entered into force after being ratified by the Federal Parliament of Somalia on February 21, 2024, and by the General Assembly of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on July 26, 2024 (SONNA, 2024; Anadolu Agency, 2024). According to the official minutes of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the agreement includes “the deployment of Turkish Armed Forces personnel to Somalia for a period of two years to assist in efforts to enhance Somalia’s security against terrorism and various other threats” (TBMM, 2024).

Article 1 of Section I of the agreement stipulates that the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of the Federal Republic of Somalia, covering an area of 830,000 km<sup>2</sup>, will be protected by the Turkish Navy in conjunction with the “building from scratch” of the Somali Navy. Abdulkadir Nur, Somalia’s Defense Minister at the time, stated in an official announcement on his X account, “This groundbreaking 10-year agreement will significantly strengthen the Somali government’s efforts to protect its sovereignty” (Anadolu Agency) (Defence Turk, 2024).

#### b. Maritime Security Authorities and EEZ Revenue Sharing

Under Article III of the Agreement, 30% of the maritime revenues generated from Somalia’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have been allocated to Türkiye; these revenues include funds derived from combating illegal fishing, maritime transport, port services, and hydrocarbon exploration activities. According to Defence Turk’s assessment: “Türkiye will have full authority to oversee maritime security operations in Somali territorial waters, assist in the restructuring of the Somali Navy, and receive 30% of the

resources derived from the Blue Water Economic Zone” (Defence Turk, 2024).

Turkish Armed Forces units have the authority to conduct unrestricted patrols in designated areas, such as the Gulf of Aden, Somali territorial waters, and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) extending 200 nautical miles, pursuant to a decision by the Grand National Assembly. This authority also includes real-time intelligence sharing with NATO’s Ocean Shield, the EU’s Atalanta, and CTF-151 (Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, 2024).

### c. Somali Navy Reconstruction and Capacity-Building Program

Under the agreement, Türkiye has agreed to provide Somalia with the following military equipment:

- 6 MRTP-34/34E-class coast guard vessels (Ares Shipyard)
- 2 OPV-120 (Offshore Patrol Vessels)
- 4 Bayraktar TB2/UAV systems
- ANKA-S and Akıncı UAV systems
- 3D air defense radar and UAV control stations (Ministry of National Defense, 2024; Turkish Research Foundation, 2024).

A total of 150 Somali naval personnel will undergo a 24-month training program at the Turkish Somali Joint Naval Operations Center to be established in Mogadishu. This training initiative will be conducted at sea using the TCG İstanbul (Ada-class corvette) and the Oruç Reis seismic research vessel. According to an analysis by the Turkish Studies Foundation, “Türkiye is also responsible for the administration of the Somali Military Academy and War College, and the training curriculum is entirely under the supervision of the

Turkish Armed Forces” (Turkish Studies Foundation, 2024).

### d. The Strategic Catalyst for the Agreement: The Ethiopia-Somaliland Protocol

The Framework Agreement on Defense and Economic Cooperation signed between Türkiye and Somalia on February 8, 2024, took place during a period of significant upheaval in the regional balance of power. The Memorandum of Understanding signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland on January 1, 2024, is controversial in nature and permits Ethiopia to use a 20-kilometer coastal strip along the Red Sea for 50 years in exchange for Ethiopia’s recognition of Somaliland’s independence. The Federal Government of Somalia has characterized this agreement as a clear violation of territorial integrity (The Soufan Center, 2024; Al-Monitor, 2024).

President Mohamud’s initial reaction to this Memorandum of Understanding between Ethiopia and Somaliland was quite harsh. However, following the signing of the aforementioned agreement between Türkiye and Somalia, Somalia’s official stance toward the Memorandum of Understanding between Ethiopia and Somaliland has gradually softened. Mohamud stated, “We are informing the Somali people that this agreement focuses on cooperation between Somalia and Türkiye in the areas of maritime defense and the economy. The agreement is not directed against any country or government and contains no ill will or hostility.” (Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, February 2024).

Ali Bakır, a member of the Atlantic Council and a faculty member at Qatar University,

has characterized this agreement, signed between Türkiye and Somalia in 2024, as a partial response to recent events in Ethiopia and Somaliland. Noting that the primary factor is the result of Türkiye's intensive presence in Somalia for over a decade, Bakır stated: "While this agreement addresses specific concerns regarding Ethiopia's intervention in Somali territory via Somaliland, it also reflects the outcome of Türkiye's comprehensive and sustained intervention in Somalia over the past decade. This intervention was characterized by efforts in nation-building, security, and humanitarian aid, particularly during a period when the international community largely neglected Somalia." (Ali Bakır, Qatar University / Atlantic Council, Breaking Defense, 2024).

Donelli (2024) observes that two rival alliances have emerged during this period: one comprising Ethiopia, Somaliland, and the UAE, and the other comprising Somalia, Egypt, Eritrea, and Saudi Arabia. Initially, Türkiye attempted to act as a mediator in this situation, but following the 2024 Agreement, it formed a closer alliance with Somalia. While this strategy reduced Ankara's flexibility, it significantly increased its direct influence in Somalia (Donelli, 2024).

### e. The Hydrocarbon Dimension and TPAO's Role

A significant milestone in the conclusion of the defense agreement was reached with the signing of the hydrocarbon agreement in Istanbul on March 7, 2024 (TRT Africa, 2024) (The Africa Report, 2025). This agreement was signed by Alparslan Bayraktar, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, and Daahir Shire Mohamed, Somali Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, granting the Turkish Petroleum

Corporation (TPAO) the right to explore for oil and natural gas in Somalia's exclusive economic zone (The Africa Report, 2025).

Under the terms of the agreement, TPAO has the right to conduct exploration and production in three offshore blocks covering a total area of 16,000 square kilometers off the Somali coast (The Africa Report, 2025). Somalia's total offshore potential encompasses 216 blocks and may contain up to 30 billion barrels of hydrocarbon reserves (TRT Africa, 2024; DefenceWeb, 2024).

The details of the agreement are summarized in an 11-page document (The Africa Report, 2025). According to the document:

- TPAO will finance exploration and production activities and will be able to recover up to 90% of its costs through the "cost-of-oil" mechanism.
- Somalia will receive 5% of the revenues generated from production as a guaranteed amount.
- TPAO will be exempt from surface rent and administrative fees, as well as signature, development, or production bonuses.
- Disputes arising from the agreement will be resolved in Turkish courts in Istanbul, designated as the competent authority.

One aspect of the agreement that has drawn criticism is the stability clause. According to Article 8, if Somalia amends its laws and these changes increase the costs for Turkish contractors, Somalia is obligated to compensate for any resulting losses within one year (LSE International Development, 2025). Mohamed Malin of the London School of Economics assesses this provision as follows: "Any changes

made by the Somali government regarding taxation, regulation, or reform could result in heavy financial penalties. This situation could hinder the government's ability to implement the changes necessary for long-term growth" (LSE International Development, 2025).

Tunç Demirtaş, one of the agreement's advocates, argues that the cost recovery mechanism complies with international standards and states that the revenue generated by TPAO should be considered a return on investment rather than "profit": "TPAO invests in oil exploration and production activities. They spend a significant amount of money upfront and recoup that money later from the oil they produce. The 90 percent figure refers to this arrangement. This percentage is set aside to reimburse the contractor's costs. This amount does not go to the Turkish government or any other institution in Türkiye" (The Africa Report, 2025).

As part of the implementation of the agreement, the Oruç Reis seismic research vessel was dispatched to Somalia in October 2024 (Aden, 2025). Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed the following sentiments as he bid farewell to the vessel: "For many years, the Somali region has been associated with conflict, instability, and famine. Following the Oruç Reis's findings, this region will now experience economic growth and prosperity" (Aden, 2025).

As of April 2025, the Oruç Reis had conducted 3D seismic surveys in 78% of the maritime zones along the Somali coast (Aden, 2025). Based on this information, in February 2026, the deep-sea drilling vessel Çağrı Bey was dispatched to Somalia, accompanied by three Turkish warships (TCG Sancaktar, TCG Gökova, and TCG

Bafra) (Cumhuriyet, 2026). Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar announced in April 2026 that drilling operations would begin at the Curad-1 well, providing the following technical details regarding the operation: "The sea in Somalia reaches a depth of 3,480 meters, which is equivalent to a water depth of 3.5 kilometers. Following that, we plan to drill another 3.5 kilometers. Our goal is to discover and extract the oil in that region. This initiative we are undertaking in Somalia is a project significant enough to fundamentally alter the dynamics of the entire region. We are optimistic about its potential."

Somali Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Daahir Shire Mohamed described this development as "a significant milestone in the country's economic recovery" and "a sign that Somalia is moving toward a secure and prosperous future."

In this context, the agreements reached in 2024 have transformed Türkiye-Somalia relations from a partnership focused on humanitarian aid and development into a strategic alliance centered on maritime security and the protection of energy resources. While these agreements support Somalia's goals of safeguarding its sovereignty and generating revenue from the blue economy, they also offer Türkiye an opportunity to establish a tangible presence in the Indian Ocean.

### Conclusion and Future Vision

While relations between Türkiye and Somalia have deep historical roots, they have undergone a significant strategic transformation in recent years, particularly since 2011. Initially focused on humanitarian aid and development, these

relations have evolved into a more organized and comprehensive approach centered on security sector reform and military cooperation, reflecting the growing security challenges in Somalia and the region's increasingly complex geopolitical landscape. Some of the most tangible signs of this transformation include the establishment of the TÜRK SOM Military Training Center and the implementation of ongoing support mechanisms aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity of the Somali Armed Forces.

The Framework Agreement on Defense and Economic Cooperation, signed on February 8, 2024, has elevated this strategic partnership in the field of maritime security to a new level. This 10-year agreement imposes significant obligations on Türkiye to protect Somalia's approximately 3,333-kilometer coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) from illegal fishing, piracy, and terrorist threats. As a result, while the agreement strengthens Somalia's objectives regarding maritime sovereignty and the blue economy, it also enables Türkiye to establish a more formal military and economic presence in the East African and Indian Ocean regions.

Cooperation between Türkiye and Somalia in the field of maritime security has the potential to significantly influence regional and global geopolitical dynamics. In this context, Türkiye is actively implementing its "Blue Homeland" doctrine in the Indian Ocean and is making progress toward its strategic objectives, such as energy security, the protection of maritime trade routes, and the monitoring of maritime areas. From Somalia's perspective, this partnership establishes a foundation for institutional and sustainable approaches to

address persistent maritime security challenges; it offers a vital opportunity to manage maritime resources and effectively enhance economic autonomy.

The regional implications of the agreement are also of vital importance and should not be overlooked. Following the memorandum of understanding between Ethiopia and Somaliland, which has led to disputes, particularly regarding port access and maritime zones, Türkiye's explicit support for Somalia's territorial integrity and sovereignty claims is directly impacting the stability of the Horn of Africa. The expansion of Türkiye's military and economic engagement in Somalia could influence the policy priorities of other regional actors (China, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt). In the near future, Türkiye's increasing support for the modernization and capacity enhancement of the Somali Navy could enable Somalia to become a more prominent and effective participant in the regional maritime security framework. If current trends continue, relations between Türkiye and Somalia are expected to develop in three main dimensions over the next five years:

The first dimension involves changes in the maritime sector. If the Somali Navy is institutionally strengthened with Türkiye's assistance and the seismic data collected by the Oruç Reis is used as a foundation for offshore drilling initiatives, Türkiye's operational presence within Somalia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) will gain significant momentum after 2026. In an optimistic scenario, this development could enable Somalia to finally generate significant revenue from its blue economy, while also allowing Türkiye to strengthen its logistical infrastructure, which

effectively functions as a naval base in the Horn of Africa.

Second, a transformation is underway in the defense sector, and security measures are being formally implemented. The expansion of the TURKSOM Base's training capacity to include higher education and advanced military training demonstrates that this cooperation is moving beyond simple, short-term training obligations toward establishing the fundamental framework of Somali security institutions. However, the sustainability of this transformation is closely linked to the stability of Somalia's domestic politics and the containment of the influence of armed groups such as al-Shabaab. The potential for units trained by Türkiye to be used in inter-factional conflicts remains a significant cause for concern regarding the ongoing development of institutional capacity.

Third, there is a growing trend toward diplomacy and mediation. Through agreements signed in 2024, Türkiye has taken a proactive role in mediating tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia; this development has elevated Ankara from merely a bilateral partner to the status of a genuine mediator in resolving regional conflicts. In an environment where competition between Gulf countries and local powers is escalating, Türkiye's ability to maintain this position will be of vital importance not only for safeguarding its own security interests but also for establishing a comprehensive security framework in the Horn of Africa.

In conclusion, the strategic development of Türkiye-Somalia relations, which focuses on maritime security, is a dynamic process that goes beyond the strengthening of bilateral ties and is transforming the broader geopolitical landscape of the Horn

of Africa and the Indian Ocean. This cooperation serves as a concrete example of a sustainable cooperation framework based on the principles of mutual benefit, sovereignty, and regional stability. Considering the 2024 agreements and subsequent developments, it can be said that Türkiye has moved beyond merely being a provider of humanitarian aid or a security trainer in Somalia to assume the role of a vital strategic partner in the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean. This shift carries significant historical implications for the future of both countries and the regional power dynamics in the Horn of Africa; it emerges as one of the geopolitical trends that must be closely monitored over the next decade.

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