



## Turkish Army and Military Industry Presence in Africa<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract:

Turkey puts an emphasis on the African connections in general and also strengthening its military connection with the African countries. The economic, diplomatic, cultural partnerships of Turkey and Africa are more discussed but the security, army and military industry connection between Ankara and the African countries is less captured, according to some experts, so now we put the dimension of security, army and military industry in the centre of our study.

Turkish army and military industry is present in Africa in various forms: Turkey is supporting international peacekeeping missions in Africa, Turkish military export is growing on the continent, Ankara is making defence, military agreements with several African country, Turkish army has training programs for African soldiers. And lastly the Turkish army is present in two countries: Libya, where Turkish troops support the government in the civil war, and in Somalia, where they are operating a military training camp.

We would like to study through these actions how Turkey is connected to African countries and analyze whether these are individual actions that connect Ankara and the African countries or they indicate levels of deepening connections.

### Keywords:

Military export, military industry, Turkey-Africa connection, Turkish defence, Turkish Army, Turkish defence.

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### ***Introduction - Turkey Puts More Emphasis on Africa***

Turkey increased the number of its embassies on the African continent in the last two decades. In 2002, there were 12 countries where Turkey had direct diplomatic presence out of the 54 African countries. Now in 2022 there are 43 Turkish embassies in Africa, which means that just twenty years ago Turkey had close diplomatic connections with only 22 % of the African countries and now with almost 80 % of them, and Ankara is still planning to open new embassies on this continent in the future. This one information illustrates how much more emphasis Turkey puts on Africa.

Because we focus now on the military Turkey's connections with Africa, we have to mention that Turkey has Turkish military mission attachés in several places in the world where Turkish government decides to send them. Military attachés are military diplomats which observe military missions, developments in the country which they are posted (Prout, 2002, p. 47). In total there are 83 Turkish military attachés and 19 of them in Africa, which is more than a fifth (22,9%) of the total number of this positions (Ministry of National Defence of Republic of Türkiye, 2022). The 19 Turkish military attaché is covering almost all the African countries as they are accredited for 48 African countries out of the 54 (Ministry of National Defence of Republic of Türkiye, 2022). Adding the fact that the majority of these military attachés were sent after 2002, we can state that the AKP-led Turkey take the African connections much more serious than the Turkish governments before (Kenfack Kitio, 2020, p. 53).

### ***New Dimension of Turkey's Foreign Policy is Army and Military Industry Cooperation with Africa***

These facts above are only few examples that show that Turkey puts an emphasis on the African connections in general and indicates that Turkey is also strengthening its military connection with the African countries, which we will discuss more detailed as the topic of this study. The economic, diplomatic, cultural partnerships of Turkey and Africa are more discussed but the security, army and military industry connection between Ankara and the African countries is less captured, according to some experts (Kenfack Kitio, 2020, p. 44), so now we put the dimension of security, army and military industry in the centre of our study.

Our main questions for our current topic:

- How was Turkey able to strengthen its military and military industrial presence in Africa?
- What fields does the Turkish army and military industrial presence have in Africa?

Turkey could strengthen its army and military industry connections with Africa by the following actions, which can be also listed as fields, types of presence of the Turkish



army and military industry in Africa. Before we discuss them thoroughly let us look through this fields in bullet points:

1. Support UN, NATO and EU military peacekeeping operations in an African country
2. Selling Turkish defense products to African countries
3. Defence agreements between Turkey and an African country
4. Training African troops and give them products and know how.
5. Turkish troops in Africa. e.g.: building army base in African land, like in Somalia

In the following pages we would like to detail these fields and at the end we would like to see if these fields are only types of army and military industry presence and connections or also levels of connections.

### ***Support UN, NATO and EU Military Peacekeeping Operations***

There are places on the African continent where the UN sent peacekeeping operations and Turkey contributed to several such operations. There were 12 UN peacekeeping operations in Africa between 1993-2018 in which Turkey took part, most of them was under the AKP leadership (Siradag, 2018). Between 1993-95, Turkey gave the force commander (Lieutenant-General Çevik Bir) for the UN Operation in Somalia, named UNOSOM II, “but it did not become actively involved in most of the UN peacekeeping operations in Africa until 2005” but after the AKP came to power, although with limited contribution but Turkey began to engage actively, in the UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, says Abdurrahim Siradag in his study for Africa Security Review (Siradag, 2018, p. 9).

Since the AKP leadership Turkey entered nine UN peacekeeping operation in these African countries: Liberia, Ivory Coast, Burundi, Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali. And also three other UN peacekeeping operation were continued since AKP were elected (United Nations, n. d. (h)).

While Turkey only contributed to eight of the 24 UN peacekeeping operations between 1989-2018, in 2018 Turkey contributed to four of the seven in Africa. (Siradag, 2018) Currently, in 2022, Turkey is contributing to eight UN operations and six out of them are in Africa. (United Nations, n. d. (a)) so we can say that, in the respect of contribution to international missions, Africa is the focus point for Turkey.

In 2022 there are six African country where Turkish delegates support UN missions: Central African Republic, Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia. These are the UN missions Turkey contributing until autumn of 2022: MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNITAMS, UNMISS, UNSOM.

UN Peace keeping missions in 2022 Turkey is contributing			
Abbreviation	Full Name of the Mission	Country	Goal
1, MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	Central African Republic	to protect civilians and support transition processes in the Central African Republic
2, MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali	Mali	supporting political process and helping stabilize Mali
3, MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	goal is to protect civilians and consolidate peace in the DRC
4, UNITAMS	United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan	Sudan	to provide support to Sudan during its political transition to democratic rule
5, UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan	South Sudan	to protect civilians and build durable peace
6, UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia	Somalia	to achieve peace, reconciliation and stability in Somalia

Table 1: UN Peace keeping missions in 2022 Turkey is contributing  
 Source: The authors construction according to UN official data available:  
<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>

MINUSCA, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic, is mandated to protect civilians and support transition processes in Central African Republic. Total number of deployed personnel in this mission: 16,327 (United Nations, n. d. (b)). Turkey gives individual police personal (United Nations, 2022a) to this mission: 5 out of the total 2629 police personnel (United Nations, n. d. (b)) of this mission.

The UN started the mandate of a mission in Mali, called the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Established in 2013 April and is ongoing applying UN military and police personnel coming from countries all around the world supporting political process and helping stabilize Mali.



The mission has two strategic priorities: 1, “to support the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali by the Malian parties and other relevant Malian actors” and 2, “to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal violence and re-establish State authority, State presence and basic social services in Central Mali” (MINUSMA, n. d. (a)). Total number of deployed personnel in this mission: 17,557 (United Nations, n. d. (c)). Turkey is one of the contributing countries (together with 25 other countries), that gives police personnel for MINUSMA (MINUSMA, n. d. (b)). Specifically 12 Turkish police personnel (United Nations, 2022a) are in this mission, out of 1744 deployed police personnel (United Nations, n. d. (c)) of this mission.

MONUSCO, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and its goal is to protect civilians and consolidate peace in the DRC. Total number of deployed personnel in this mission: 18,278 (United Nations, n. d. (f)). Turkey gives individual police personal to this mission: 15 out of the 1665 deployed police personal of this mission. (United Nations, 2022a)

UNITAMS, the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan, is a special political mission, launched in June 2020 to provide support to Sudan for an initial 12-month period during its political transition to democratic rule. It was later extended twice and now runs until June 2023 (UNITAMS, n.d.). According to UN official online data as of 30 June 2022 the UN only sent 20 policemen into this mission. (United Nations, n. d. (a)) Turkey support this mission with one individual policeman (United Nations, 2022a).

UNMISS, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, is a mission which works with the people of South Sudan to protect civilians and build durable peace. Total number of deployed personnel as of June 2022 in this mission: 17,954 (United Nations, n. d. (g)). Turkey gives individual police personnel to this mission: 34 (United Nations, 2022a) out of the total 1468 deployed police personnel (United Nations, n.d. (g)) of this mission.

UNSOM, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, was established on June 3, 2013. The mandate of UNSOM was subsequently renewed until October 31, 2023. (United Nations, 2022d) The goal is “to achieve peace, reconciliation and stability” in Somalia. (UNSOM, n. d.) Turkey supported this mission with one expert on mission until September 2022 (United Nations, 2022a).

There were 179 persons from Turkey in UN missions in September 2022 altogether, which is not a very large number considering that total number of UN peacekeepers was 75,224, according to UN official data from September 2022 (United Nations, n.d. (a)) and the greatest contributor, Bangladesh, is giving 7003 personnel for the UN missions. (United Nations, 2022c) But it is significant that Turkey tries to support and be present in almost all of the UN peacekeeping missions in Africa. In October 2022 there were seven UN missions operating in Africa and Turkey contributed to six of them. (United Nations, 2022b)

In connection with Turkish participation in NATO operations in Africa the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs states: “Turkey participates in Operation Ocean Shield which was initiated by NATO on 17 August 2009 to contribute to the international efforts to combat piracy off the Horn of Africa. Turkey supports a long-term role for NATO in combating piracy and contributes actively to these endeavours. Within this context, Turkey participates in Combined Task Force-151 (CTF-151) as well as NATO’s Ocean Shield Operation with naval vessels.” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Türkiye, n. d.) According to the article of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Turkey also participated in NATO’s “Operations Unified Protector” (OUP), which was launched to protect Libyan civilians and civilian populated areas after the crisis of the Gaddafi government. The operation was between March 23 and October 31, 2011. “Turkey contributed to the OUP with frigates, a submarine, two tanker aircrafts and four F-16s fighters, in non-combat roles. The operation was successfully concluded on 31 October 2011” – stated the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Türkiye, n. d.).

Turkey also contributed to EU military missions in Africa. Ankara supported the European Union Force Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA), conducted between April 2014 and March 2015, and the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) conducted between February 2013 and May 2018 (Siradag, 2018).

### Turkish Defense Products to African Countries

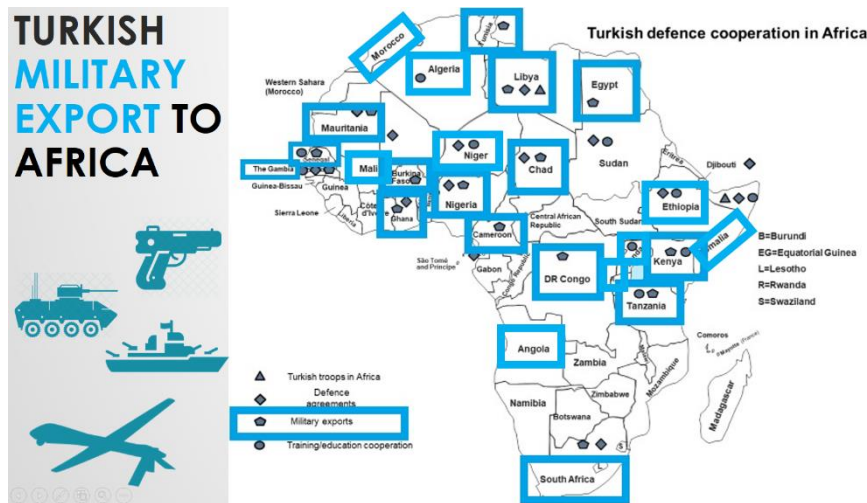


Figure 1: African countries Turkey exporting military products  
 Source: Besenyő, J. (2021), ‘Turkey’s growing interest on the African continent’, JCEEAS –Vol. 1, No. 1-2  
 transformed by the author according to <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en>



Turkey is working on to be less dependent on foreign military products, and become more of a self-sufficient country in connection with military products, as well as an exporter of military products, in which the country is quite successful. The latest data from SIPRI shows that Turkey fell from being the 3rd largest recipient of US arms between 2012-2016 to being the 21st between 2017-2021. Examining the same periods Turkey increased its major arms export by 31 % (Wezeman, Kuimova and Wezeman, 2021). Both information regarding changes between 2012-16 and 2017-21 is quite a big shift for Turkey. Between 2017 to 2021 Turkey was the 12th largest arms exporter, (Wezeman, Kuimova and Wezeman, 2021) and the country aims to to be among the top six countries in the world in terms of defense and aerospace exports, (Sünnetci, 2021) and to reach a total of USUSD25 Billion export in this field until 2023 for the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Turkey (Sünnetci, 2019b). Aiming this goal Turkey is working to reach more and more buyers for its military products, it is reported that in the beginning of 2019 Turkey exported defence products to over 60 countries (Sünnetci, 2019b) however, only 2,5 years later the country exported to 140 countries in the summer of 2021 (Sünnetci, 2021). More and more African country are interested in what Turkey can offer for its security and military and many African states have already ordered Turkish defence products.

According to data from recent years, the following African countries have already imported Turkish military products in the past 5 years. We will number each African purchaser country to see together how many of the African states have already imported Turkish military products in recent years.

Until 2019 we know that these African countries were among the main purchasers of Turkish military products in the continent:

1. Burkina Faso, 2. Cameroon, 3. Chad, 4. Egypt, 5. Ghana, 6. Kenya, 7. Libya, 8. Nigeria, 9. Senegal, 10. South Africa, 11. the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 12. Tunisia (Sünnetci, 2019b)

After 2019 we have information about some other African countries who purchased Turkish military products:

13. Tanzania in 2019, (Bakeer, 2019) 15. Morocco in 2021 (France 24, 2021). 16. Togo in the autumn of 2021 (Lionel, 2022). 14. Angola also imported Turkish military products in the end of 2021 (France 24, 2021).

From the year 2021 we know about several African countries who purchased Turkish military products, we only mention those who are new compared to the other countries mentioned earlier:

17. Algeria, 18. Mali, 19. Mauritania, 20. Niger, 21. Rwanda, 22. Somalia, 23. Uganda. (Bayram, 2022) Also there is information that (24.) Ethiopia imported “arms and ammunition, parts and accessories” from Turkey in 2021. (Trading Economics, n. d.)

List of the African countries purchased Turkish defence products between 2018-22
Algeria
Angola
Burkina Faso
Cameroon
Chad
Egypt
Ethiopia
Ghana
Kenya
Libya
Mali
Mauritania
Morocco
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Senegal
Somalia
South Africa
Tanzania
the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda

Table 2: List of the African countries purchased Turkish defence products between 2018-21 (in alphabetic order)  
 Source: The authors construction according to own research

As we can see on Figure 1, nearly half of the African countries have already purchased Turkish military products in recent years. Africa is large market for military products with a few major exporters (Russia, US, France, Germany, China) dominating a huge percentage (76%) (The Conversation, 2022) of military products export to the continent, but Turkey was still able increase its export to Africa in the recent years.

From 2017 to 2020 the Turkish defence and aerospace industry achieved steady and increasing export to Africa: in 2017 the Turkish defence and aerospace export to the African continent was 63,790 Million USD (Sünnetci, 2019b). In the following year,





in 2018, Turkey could reach: USD 84,349 million (Sünnetci, 2019b) in this category, which is more than 32 % increase. In 2019 it fell by about 10% to 75,961 million, (Sünnetci, 2019a) but in 2020 increased by about 10% to USD 82.9 million (Hairsine and Ünveren, 2022). The revenue that Turkey could earn from the export of its defence products to the African continent in 2020 is several million dollars higher than in 2017. We can see that this is an annual average increase of 10%, from USD 63,790 million to USD 82.9 million in three years. What is even more spectacular is that in 2021 Turkey earned USD 460.6 million from exports of defence and aerospace products to Africa, a more than five-fold (about 560%) increase compared to 2020 (Kenez, 2022a). Although according to SIPRI 2021 data Turkey is still only has 0,5% share of global defence military export to the African continent and still far behind Russia, who has a 44% share of major arms exports to African countries, and USA (17 %) both of which export billions of USD worth major arms to the continent, and also behind China (10 %) and France (6.1 %) (Wezeman, Kuimova and Wezeman, 2021), but considering the possibilities of Turkey and the efforts Ankara made towards selling Turkish defence, military and aerospace products to African countries the result is outstanding as the numbers skyrocketed between 2020 and 2021. The huge increase in the Turkish defence and aerospace export to Africa also indicates that the African countries have growing interest for Turkish products (Yaşar, 2022). What is more, although in 2021 Turkey's arms sales reached a record level in general, but the biggest increase was in the export to African countries, which shows that Turkey still has great potential in this market. (Kenez, 2022a). The reason of the increase of Turkish export is interpreted differently by experts: some see it as a successful outcome of the Turkish government's strategy of making Africa Turkey's new arms market. Others believe that Turkey has aggressive marketing that favours companies belonging to businessmen close to President Erdoğan (Kenez, 2022a).

Let us see the advantages of the Turkish military products that are making their way in Africa at the midst of other defence and military products with different backgrounds.

Nowadays, Turkish military products are reaching the level of state-of-the-art and also meet NATO-standards, but at the same time they are cheaper than similar products made in Western countries. Furthermore, Turkish military products are reported to be delivered on time and have good after-sales service (Sünnetci, 2019b).

Some experts highlight that besides the high quality and low cost the Turkish military products are sold with fewer strings attached (France 24, 2021), some even say there are no-strings attached (Yaşar, 2022). This indicates that some African countries feel that buying products from other countries make them attached to the seller, but according to some experts buying Turkish military products leaves more room for African countries as buyers and does not attach them so tightly to Turkey than if they would buy from others. On the other, hand some other experts state that the arms

exports from Turkey to Africa is an element which helps Turkey to build deeper bonds with African countries (Yaşar, 2022). It is clear that we already listed the main conditions that decide the sale of military products: quality, price, obligation, arrival of the order, after-sale service. But there is one emotional factor which helps Turkey to strengthen its position in certain regions in Africa, especially in the Sahel: in the midst of political discontent and anti-French sentiment Turkey can position itself as a new and reliable partner who is not a former colonial power (Seleshie, 2022). As we can see it on Figure 1, most of the countries of the Sahel already purchased Turkish military products. What is more, for example in 2018, Senegal, a Sahel country, was the only African country of the top 15 countries that imported defence and aerospace products from Turkey. In that year Senegal had the largest increase of the import of the Turkish military products as an African country compared to the year before (Sünnetci, 2019b).

Studying what kind of defence and military products Turkey sell to the African countries we can see electronic and technical equipment, armored transport vehicles and ships are present frequently (Besenyő, 2021). Some other reports say, lower-cost equipment, particularly rifles, handguns and armoured vehicles are also popular, however, targeting pods, combat aircrafts also occurred in some orders (Martín, 2021). We can have exact examples for products from the following: “African countries are mostly interested in armoured vehicles (OTOKAR 4x4, NUROL Ejder), battle and sniper rifles (MKE PMT-76, MKE KNT 76), as well as drones/UAV (ANKA-S, BAYRAKTAR TB2)” (Seleshie, 2022).

We should highlight more the background of two product of this list:

Otokar is a leading supplier of the Turkish Military and Security Forces for tactical vehicles and its products are widely used in Africa. In 2019 the General Manager of Otokar, Serdar Görgüç said that: „Africa is among our principal markets and we aim to increase our presence in the continent” (ASDNews, 2019). As the firm is a registered NATO and United Nations supplier, Otokar is delivering vehicles with modern equipment in line with the specific needs of users in Africa and several countries in the continent already using them. For example, Otokar Cobra was sold in a large number on the continent to: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Algeria, Mauritania, Nigeria, Rwanda and Tunisia. „The 4x4 Cobra vehicle features a common platform that can be adapted for a variety of roles, and the vehicle can be used as a weapons carrier, reconnaissance vehicle, armoured personnel carrier, ambulance, NBC reconnaissance vehicle etc. The Cobra can transport between four and nine people, including the driver, depending on configuration” (Martín, 2021).

An other Turkish-made military product popular in Africa is the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) of the company Baykar: Bayraktar TB2 drone, which was already used in Libya, Morocco, Ethiopia, Niger, and Nigeria (Kharief, 2022b). This is a Tactical UAV capable of conducting Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and armed attack missions. Some experts say that Turkey uses its Bayraktar drone as an „armaments

ambassador” in Africa, which paves the way for Turkish companies (Kharief, 2022b). Bayraktar TB2 Drone’s length is 6.5 meter, the width is 12 meters. This drone can carry 95 kg projectiles if it is needed and its maximum firing range is 15 kilometers (Baykar, n. d.). In Libya these drones helped the UN-recognised government contain rebels led by Khalifa Haftar.

Discussing the increase of military export to Africa, the head of Turkey's Foreign Economic Relations Board (the NGO which hosted Turkey-Africa partnership summit in December 2021), Nail Olpak, emphasised that “if we see the defence sector only as weapons, rockets, guns, tanks and rifles, it would be wrong” - highlighting the fact that the Turkish military export has a much wider scale. A good example of this is the Turkish mine-clearing vehicles, which qualify as defense industry sales, and have already been sold in the continent to Togo (France 24, 2021).

### **Defence Agreements with Turkey**

<b>African Countries Linked to Turkey with At Least one Military or Security Agreement</b>	
<b>Field of Cooperation</b>	<b>Countries</b>
Military Training, Science & Techniques	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia
Gendarme Training	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya
Police Training	Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinee Bissau, Niger, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda
Defense Industry & Scientifique Cooperation	Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Brazzaville, Ethiopia, Gambia, Mali, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan

Table 3: Defence Agreements between Turkey and African countries

Source: Alexe Fridolin Kenfack Kitio, *The Rising Security Cooperation of Turkey In Africa*, p. 46

We have seen how much the sales of Turkish military products to the African continent have shown recently, however, not only the export of Turkish military products to Africa has increased significantly, but also Turkish efforts to sign various types of security-related cooperation agreements with African countries. New agreements have been signed in recent years between Turkey and African countries, such as agreements on the training of security personnel and security cooperation agreements, which are much broader in scope. Some of the security personnel training agreements permitted Turkey to open training facilities. Military framework agreements, subjects of security cooperation agreements, cover training, technical and scientific cooperation (Yaşar, 2022).

Turkey signed different types of security-related agreements with 30 African states in total, many of them are keen to take advantage of Turkey's experience in the counter-insurgencies, the modernization of its security sectors, and the developments of its defence industry (Yaşar, 2022). Objectives of the agreements, signed with Uganda, Benin, Sudan, Tanzania and the Ivory Coast in 2021: Industrial production, as well as the sale and maintenance of military equipment, technical and logistical support and information exchange (Martín, 2021).

Studying the agreement between Ghana and Turkey (Framework Agreement Ghana 2011) it can be seen as a perfect example to get an idea of the points of military agreements between Turkey and African countries. The Framework Agreement Ghana 2011 details the fields of cooperation in the area of army and military industry in these points:

- „Cooperation in military training and instruction;
- Cooperation between military institutions and contact visits;
- Participation in exercises/training, sending observers to exercises;
- Cooperation in defense industry;
- Military cooperation between the Armed Forces;
- The organizational structure of the Armed Forces;
- The structure and equipment of military units, personal management;
- Cooperation in military intelligence;
- Cooperation in military medicine and health services;
- Cooperation on communication, electronics and information systems;
- Cooperation in operations other than war, such as peacekeeping, humanitarian aid and counter piracy operations;
- Exchange of information on military legal systems;
- Cooperation in the field of mapping and hydrography;
- Exchange of personnel for professional development;
- Cooperation in military scientific and technological research;
- Social, sportive and cultural activities;
- Other areas to be agreed upon by the Parties” (Kenfack Kitio, 2020)

As we can see that this agreement and usually defence, military agreements between Turkey and African countries helps both sides. For example, it allows Ankara

to build new markets for Turkish military products, but it helps the African country, in this case Ghana, for example to modernise its military with Turkish help in field of training, equipment, education.

Another agreement which is worth highlighting is the military agreement with Tunisia from 2017, which includes the training of Tunisian military personnel, mainly on Turkish soil, and an arrangement on investments for the import of Turkish military equipment. The agreement is extraordinary in that it broke the fifty-year-old exclusive market access preference reserved for the French and American military industries and opened a new market for Turkish military products with crucial importance to Ankara (Kharief, 2022a). This agreement also shows that even if Turkey is a smaller actor today and has less experience in the field of military exports to Africa, there are still huge opportunities for them, as more and more African countries are opening up to Turkish products. For example, in 2021, Tunisia received interest-free loans worth USD 150 million to purchase Turkish military equipment (Kharief, 2022a).

Military agreements, as we can see, are important tools for Turkey to strengthen its presence on the African continent, but they are usually connected to other fields that we listed at the beginning:

1. Selling Turkish defense products to African countries
2. Training African troops and give them products and know how.
3. Turkish troops in Africa.

We can see that military agreements are usually tools for Turkey to pave the way for other actions Turkey wants to take to strengthen its connections with Africa.



Figure 2: Defence Agreements between Turkey and African countries  
Source: The authors construction

### Turkish Training of African Troops

Many African country needs to modernise its army and security institutions not only with equipment but also with structure, training, education, and Turkey able to help in this field and seems to be a partner in that.

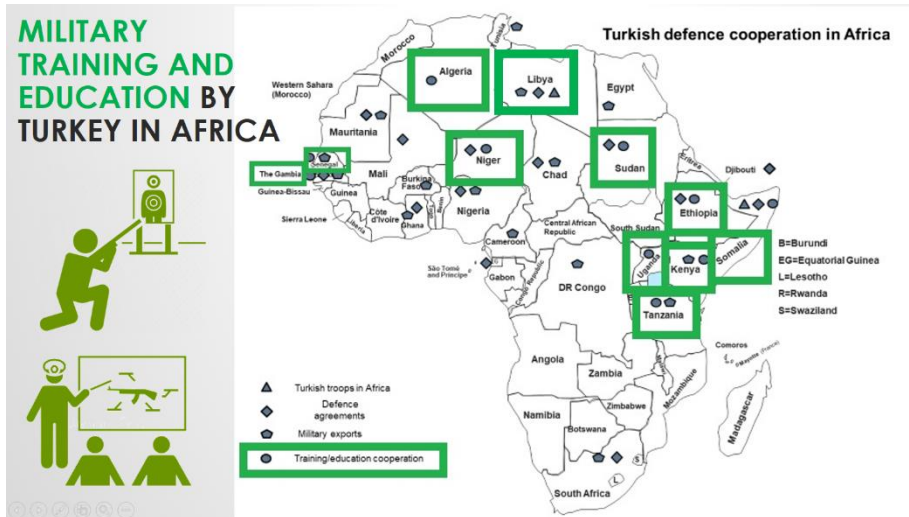


Figure 3: Training cooperation between Turkey and African countries  
 Source: Besenyő, J. (2021), 'Turkey's growing interest on the African continent', JCEEAS, Vol. 1, No. 1-2, transformed by the author.

As we can see on Table 3, Turkey has training programs with the Gambia, Senegal, Algeria, Libya, Niger, Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania.

Training cooperations give African countries different opportunities to get training for their military and security personnel from Turkish experts. The training can take place in the African country in question or in Turkish soil. Mostly leaders and staff of given African army is trained abroad in Turkey, most of the officers and NCOs would receive their training in their home country from Turkish professionals, like the training program with Somalia (Besenyő, 2021). Although there are some programs where African officers and NCOs are trained also in Turkey.

According to research of Alexe Fridolin Kenfack Kitio 2,200 military personnel from African countries received military training in Turkey by the end of 2014 and thousands of African military staffs could have training in Turkish military school until 2020. In 2017, 176 African militaries completed their training in Turkey, and for the year 2017-2018, 290 other African had the same opportunity (Kenfack Kitio, 2020).

In the year of 2013-2014 a total of 3,000 Libyan troops divided in groups of 500 received 14 months of training in Isparta, Turkey in the field of Internal Security (Şazak and Nazli, 2016). The UN recognised the government of Libya (led by Fayez al-Sarraj), but rebellious attacks led by Khalifa Haftar endangered its position since 2019. Turkey

got involved not only rhetorically but with actions: sent troops and Bayraktar drones to the Libyan government to fight back the rebels and also gave professional training for the military forces of GNA (Government of National Unity) (Zoubir, 2020).

Some Turkish Institution we can highlight regarding this topic. In The Turkish National Defence University (TNDU) almost 104 African officials from countries such as Algeria, Gambia, Senegal and Somalia received their training since creation of the University (Kenfack Kitio, 2020). The Centre of Excellence Defence against terrorism (COE-DAT) is based in Ankara and functioning in collaboration with 8 NATO countries. The NATO stated that this institute is aligned with NATO Quality Standards and gave it an unconditional accreditation (Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism, n. d.). Since this Centre is specialised on fight against terrorism, many African country who has problem with terrorist groups (such as Boko Haram, Al Shabab, Al Quaida in the Islamic Maghreb) decide to train their personnel in Turkey in COE-DAT (Kenfack Kitio, 2020).

Until 2019, from the 1990's, 7500 Gambian soldiers got training from Turkey (Alam, 2019). Considering the years and the total number it is about 250 Gambian soldiers yearly. Supporting our calculations, it is reported that in January of 2022 250 Gambian soldiers arrived to Turkey to the training base of Isparta to receive counterterrorism training (Kenez, 2022c). Regarding that the Gambian Army is 8000 soldier strong the number of Gambian soldiers trained by Turkey year after year is considerable.

### Turkish Troops in Africa

Last action on our list for Turkey to strengthen its military, defence connection in Africa is to deploy Turkish troops in an African country. And now, of course, we are only talking about sending Turkish troops to a country according to a bilateral agreement of course and not because of Turkey has war or conflict with the African country in question.

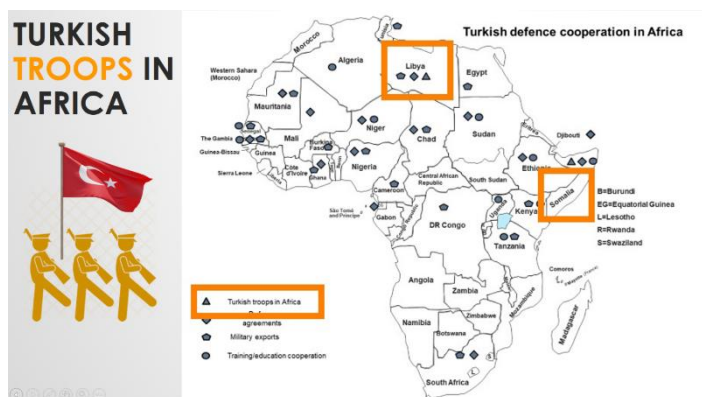


Figure 4: Turkish Troops in Africa

Source: Besenyő, J. (2021), 'Turkey's growing interest on the African continent', JCEEAS, Vol. 1, No. 1-2, Transformed by the author

There is only two country so far where Turkish troops are present officially. In Libya and in Somalia. Both cases are different from each other.

In Libya the government, led by Fayez al-Sarraj, acknowledged by the UN, called for international help for former partners of Libya when anti-government military forces, led by Khalifa Haftar attack the government in 2019. Turkey was also addressed and decided to intervene in the conflict. After the Turkish parliament gave permission Turkish troops were sent to Libya. Since then Turkish soldiers are supporting the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) against the rebel's Libyan National Army (LNA). Turkey deployed hundreds of soldiers in support of the GNA, besides of high-tech military products, like Bayraktar TB2 drones. The US Defense Department states that Ankara also paid and called thousands of Syrian fighters to Libya, but the Turkish government denies such claims of misconduct (Jones, 2021). What is for sure that Turkish troops are present in Libya and provides also training for military forces affiliated with GNA, according to Tripoli-based government's Army Staff (The Libya Update, 2022). Although the UN put an arms embargo on Libya and called out all foreign soldiers from Libya, Turkish troops are still there. Ankara argues that Turkey's presence in Libya is legitimate because the UN recognised government called Turkey for help, secondly the GNA has the right of self-defence but lacks a power for that, so Turkey is supporting it. Turkey criticised the situation that Russia, France, UAE, Egypt recognize the GNA government officially but call Turkey to stop aiding the GNA and at the same time support the anti-government military of Haftar (International Crisis Group, 2020). According to Turkish presidential spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, Turkish troops stationed in Libya will remain there as long as a bilateral military agreement between Ankara and Tripoli is active and Libya's government requests it (The Arab Weekly, 2021).

The other country where Turkish troops are present in Africa is Somalia, near Mogadishu. The reason and background of the presence of Turkish troop is different than the case in Libya. Turkey started to strengthen its relationship with Somalia since the great famine in the country in 2011. In the last more than 10 years Turkey took part in various humanitarian project and investments, which helped Somalia to develop and also gave several good economic opportunities to Turkish businesses.

Turkey took a huge part in modernising the Somali Army organizationally, giving professional training for several Somali soldier and policemen (Kenez, 2022b). From 2010 there is a military training cooperation accord between Somalia and Turkey, and since 2017 Turkey is training Somali soldiers and policemen in Somalia. The location is special in its kind, called the Turkish Task Force Command in Somalia (STGK), known in Somalia as Camp TURKSOM (Can Kasapoglu, 2020). Some called it a military base, but Turkey's ambassador to Somalia, Olgan Bekar, clarified that it is "not a military base like the one Turkey has in Qatar," but "a military training camp" (Rossiter and Cannon, 2018). Although a foreign military base would be not so unique in Somalia, seeing the





fact that the UK, the USA, and the UAE already have military bases in this country (Seleshie, 2022).

The complex of STGK was built by Turkey from the ground from about 50 million USD, started in March 2015 and was finished in the beginning of 2017. It is 400 hectares and houses three military schools, dormitories, depots and lounge. Camp TURKSOM is the base of the Turkish Contingent of about 300 soldiers and officers (Rossiter and Cannon, 2018).

The mission of Camp TURKSOM is, according to Turkish officials: 1, to protect Somalia from the scourge of al-Shabab and 2, provide meaningful security assistance, training. (Ahmed, 2021)

The goal is to train 10,000 members of the Somali National Army (SNA) and since its opening until summer of 2022, total of 5000 SNA soldiers and officers have already graduated here, which is already one-third of the SNA (Kenez, 2022b). One hundred of the Turkish soldiers are instructors in the complex and the other two hundred is protecting the facility. That is why some experts says that in functional terms, the Turkish military presence in Camp Turksom is not an overseas base (Rossiter and Cannon, 2018). Turkey extended the mandate of Turkish troops in Gulf of Aden, Somalia until February of 2023 for the stability of the region (Middle East Monitor, 2022).

## Conclusions

We initially asked how Turkey could strengthen its army and military industry presence in Africa, and we saw that there are certain steps that Turkey can take to that end. The second question concerns the fields of these actions which shows the presence of Turkey in an African country. We have listed five of these fields and we have seen that all of them are valid in this topic, as there are some examples of them. Looking in detail at the five actions listed at the beginning we can see that these are not only the types of presence, but also the levels, which show how deep the connection between Turkey and that African country is in the field of the army and military industry. These can be seen as related fields that form a kind of a chain.

The appropriate way to decide the relation between our 5 actions listed at the beginning is to analyze the case of a country where we can find all of them, and Somalia seems to be a good example. So, if we look at the history of the connection between Turkey and Somalia, we can make arguments about the question of the relation of our five actions:

-Turkey supported UN mission in Somalia (UNOSOM II 1993-1995) (Siradag, 2018).

- 2009 Turkey joined CTF 151, the multinational counter-piracy task force off the Somali coast (Melvin, 2019).
- 2010 Turkish leadership pledged humanitarian and military assistance to Somalia, to restore integrity, for the establishment and training of the Somali Army, Police
- There is a military training cooperation accord from 2010 between Turkey and Somalia (Can Kasapoğlu, 2020) and other agreements on Military Training, Science and Techniques, Police Training, Defense Industry and Scientific Cooperation (Kenfack Kitio, 2020).
- Turkey trained the SNA with Turkish-made weapons and also donated some Turkish-made military vehicles to them, leading some to say that Turkey is creating market for its military industry (Ahmed, 2021).
- Turkey built a training center in Mogadishu in 2017

The Somali-Turkish army and military industry connections clearly illustrate that action points we listed at the beginning, about how Turkey can strengthen its military connections with African countries, are actions interconnected actions. Even if we cannot say that one action always follows the other one as successive steps, it is clear that the more of these actions Turkey and an African country can make towards each other, the deeper their military connection will be. “Turkey in Africa: A New Emerging Power?” book also states that the training of African security personnel by Turkish trainers was an aftereffect of Turkey’s pragmatic peacekeeping support on the continent, (Tepeciklioğlu and Tepeciklioğlu, 2021) supporting our statement that the actions in our introduction are not just individual tools for Turkey to strengthen its connection with the African continent, but levels, which show the depth of connections between Ankara and an African country. Put simply: Turkey’s support for an international peacekeeping mission in an African country is the level at which Turkey has a connection with that country, but it is a milder level than Turkey being able to provide training programs to that African country. Providing training for an African country is a parallel level to the sale of Turkish military products to that country, or it would represent the next, deepening level of the connection between Turkey and an African country. Sending Turkish troops to a country means an even more serious connection between the two countries. What is more: “Turkey in Africa: A New Emerging Power?” states that The Gambia is the first place where Turkey started providing a training program to an African country, it was the “first such experiment” (from 1991) and the result of this mission was that Turkey and The Gambia built strong personal relations within the Gambian army during the decades and The Gambia began using Turkish military products. (Tepeciklioğlu and Tepeciklioğlu, 2021) The authors emphasize that after Gambia, Turkey could start its training cooperation in several other African countries and thereby strengthen Turkish influence in other countries. This indicates that the countries where Turkey may start training programs, have deeper defence-level military



connections with Ankara, which could become even deeper with new defence agreements and Turkish military exports to the country.

The training programs also helped Turkey build close, high-ranking connections with African military leadership: In Gambia the Chief of Defense Staff of Gambia's armed forces is Major General Yankuba Drammeh, who was a trainee in the Turkish training program and he is now said to be a great proponent of Turkish military assistance to West Africa (Tepeciklioğlu and Tepeciklioğlu, 2021). In Somalia the Chief of the Somali Armed Forces Brig. Gen. Odawaa Yusuf Rageh graduated from the Turkish Military Academy in 2021. These two persons illustrate the success of Turkish military trainings, which prove to be a good investment for Turkey, because having good, close connection with the Chief of the Army of an African country facilitates other military cooperations, and also makes the selling of Turkish military products to that country easier. Some expert observations support our statements that if there is a mutually reinforcing policy of arms exports, military training and defence diplomacy between Turkey and some African countries, it will enable the Turkish administration to build long-term and institutional relations with African countries (Yaşar, 2022).

If there are Turkish troops in an African country, it shows the deepest, closest connection with Turkey, but we need to state that Turkey does not seem to seek to be present with its own troops in more and more African countries. It is quite logical from the point of view that the deployment of national forces abroad cost a lot of money and effort and can completely ruin the connection with the African country, if the partner country does need, accept and allow the presence of the Turkish military one hundred percent. So, sending Turkish troops to an African country shows the closest connection between Turkey and the actual African country, but it cannot be a permanent part of the strategy to strengthen connections with an African country, unless the African country requests or needs it.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The authors hereby declare that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

### ***Notes on Contributor***

Jordán Petrócz is a PhD student at Doctoral School on Safety and Security Sciences of Óbuda University in Budapest, Hungary. His research field is the Turkish military industry and the Turkish foreign policy. He also finished as a history teacher, and he teaches history in High School. His quite different orientation is interior design, he also finished a two-year school in this topic, and he takes also part in such project in the business field.

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