



7th TÜRKİYE-AFRICA DEFENSE, SECURITY AND SPACE FORUM

DECLARATION (DRAFT)

The 7th Türkiye-Africa Defense, Security, and Space Forum, under the main theme "**Africa 2063 Vision Security Partnership**", was jointly organized by the TASAM African Institute and the TASAM National Defense and Security Institute. It was conducted as a side event of the 10th Istanbul Security Conference on **November 22, 2024**, at Wish More Hotel in Istanbul.

Participants included speakers and protocol members from various countries, regions, fields, and sectors. Numerous diplomatic representatives and delegations from African countries also attended. Local and foreign experts, academicians, and diplomats delivered speeches and presentations. Relevant authorities from Türkiye and Africa were represented, and all sessions were monitored institutionally.

The Forum addressed topics of vital importance for the present and future of Türkiye, Africa, and the region, including;"Partnership Perspectives on Africa 2063 Vision for Security, Defense, and Space", "African Maritime Security and Türkiye", "Turkish Military Presence in Somalia, Djibouti, Libya, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Mali, and New Horizons", "Perspectives for Security Cooperation in the 4th Türkiye-Africa Partnership Summit", "Defense Industry: Land, Sea, Air, Space, Police, Gendarmerie, Intelligence, and Strategic Sectors."

It was decided to present the following findings and suggestions put forward at the forum to the attention of all relevant authorities and the public:

1. Africa, with its rich natural resources, youthful population, and growth potential, is one of the most critical geographies of the 21st century. Türkiye acknowledges its historic responsibility to unlock Africa's potential and contribute to the continent's development. Türkiye aims to strengthen relations with African nations further, protect mutual interests, and support sustainable development by fostering strategic partnerships in political dialogue, economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and security.
2. The African Union's **2063 Vision** aims for inclusive growth and sustainable development, focusing on creating an integrated continent, strengthening human rights, justice, and the rule of law, building a peaceful and secure Africa, empowering women and youth, fostering cultural identity, and making Africa a global power.
3. Türkiye's relations with the African Union started in 2005 with observer membership, gained momentum in 2008 with a strategic partnership, and advanced in 2013 with the Africa Partnership Policy. Through political, economic, and security cooperation, Türkiye has contributed to Africa's development.





4. Türkiye's policies towards Africa are rooted in principles of transparency, mutual benefit, and non-interference. Unlike other nations, Türkiye tailors its approach to Africa's local dynamics, addressing needs directly through investments and collaborations.
5. Türkiye's military cooperation with African countries plays a significant role. Examples include arms sales to Nigeria, financial aid to Mauritania, military cooperation with Niger, and drone sales to Morocco and Tunisia. Türkiye also actively supports the modernization of defense sectors across the continent.
6. Türkiye aligns with the African Union's 2063 goals by participating in UN and NATO peace operations in Somalia, Sudan, Mali, and other nations to enhance regional stability. Programs aimed at training security personnel and building local capacity in countries like Algeria, Rwanda, and Senegal help establish self-sufficient security infrastructures in Africa.
7. Türkiye's lack of a colonial past and its experience in the fight against terrorism are welcomed by African countries and make Türkiye a balancing power on the continent. Türkiye contributes to the peace and security goals in Africa by using soft power elements as well as military power. Türkiye's ongoing cooperation with Africa largely coincides with the continent's goals in the 2063 vision and provides significant support for Africa to achieve its peace, security and development goals.
8. As a rising power, Türkiye is working to increase its presence in Africa and to develop its relations with Somalia. While Somalia is of strategic importance for Türkiye's initiatives in Africa, the connections provided by Turkish Airlines to Somalia contribute to the strengthening of this relationship.
9. Africa consists of 54 different countries, each with its unique challenges. From the perspective of the European Union, Africa does not project a strong diplomatic weight and is not considered as significant as regions like Ukraine. Ukraine's limited diplomatic presence in Africa, with only seven embassies, highlights its minimal influence on the continent. This situation reflects criticisms of Europe's selective diplomacy and diversity-themed activism.
10. The talent and capabilities of African nations are immense. With the right opportunities and resources, they can achieve rapid progress. Countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe have benefitted from Western military training and technology transfer but have advanced further by leveraging their internal dynamics.
11. While Africa's potential can be activated with the right strategies, security threats and diverse cultural dynamics require external actors to adopt more sensitive and comprehensive approaches when formulating policies. For example, local governance in Mali has struggled to respond effectively to ISIS attacks. Western countries, especially France, have adopted measures such as acquiring light equipment, which have proven limited in countering terrorism. In contrast, Türkiye pursues a policy that aligns with Africa's cultural diversity and external dynamics, focusing on inclusivity and understanding. In this context, it is important to adopt a sympathetic approach towards the population in Africa.



12. Fighting extremist organizations like Boko Haram and ISIS requires a nuanced understanding of local sensitivities. For example, Sufism is viewed as heretical in many parts of West Africa, revealing the diversity in Islamic identities across the region. Much of the violence in Africa stems from radical religious interpretations. However, heavy weapon systems such as tanks and armored vehicles have limited effectiveness in the continent's conditions. Nigeria's leadership has emphasized that a slow and steady strategy is more effective than swift action against Boko Haram.
13. The Eritrean army's success against Ethiopia relied on Clausewitz's doctrine of focusing on the enemy's weakest points. Such strategic lessons are important for military approaches in Africa. For instance, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's military doctrine inspired the Taliban to capture Kabul for the first time using Toyota trucks. Additionally, Gaddafi resisted NATO for six months using unregistered Toyota trucks, highlighting the importance of light and mobile vehicles in African conflicts.
14. As Africa continues to require understanding and cooperative approaches, the continent's growing geopolitical importance has prompted global actors like NATO to adjust their strategic policies toward Africa. However, what Africa needs least is new "foreign gods." The continent needs partnerships built on empathy and cooperation. Türkiye's policies toward Africa align with this understanding. NATO, China, and Russia are repositioning to balance their growing influence in the region. In this context, regional cooperation is prioritized to address security gaps in African countries.
15. NATO members, except for countries like Türkiye, are often viewed with prejudice by African nations due to their colonial histories, creating obstacles to relationship development. African nations, influenced by their colonial pasts, maintain a cautious stance toward NATO. In response, NATO has made efforts to change this perception and strengthen its role in Africa. These efforts include initiating humanitarian aid activities in Sudan and opening a NATO liaison office in Ethiopia. Through these steps, NATO has aimed to align its presence with the political and security needs of African countries while addressing their sovereignty concerns.
16. Terrorism is one of the main factors shaping the security environment in Africa. NATO is increasing its counter-terrorism capacity and providing support to African countries to combat Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and other radical groups. The protective operations carried out in 2011 and the implementation of United Nations resolutions have strengthened NATO's presence in Africa. The regime change process in Libya has had a significant impact on the effectiveness and outcomes of NATO interventions. However, it has also highlighted the problems NATO faces with authoritarian regimes.
17. Since 2005, NATO and the African Union have developed strategic cooperation, focusing on areas such as peacekeeping missions, logistical support, training, and capacity building. This collaboration has contributed to stronger responses to security threats on the continent. However, challenges such as the sovereignty concerns inherited from colonial history, the limited capacities of African nations, and conflicting interests among NATO members have made deepening this cooperation difficult. Furthermore, the varying security priorities and concerns of African nations complicate joint efforts.
18. NATO's presence in Africa holds strategic significance. To enhance its influence on the continent,



NATO needs to support African-led solutions and work in harmony with the European Union. This approach will ensure long-term peace and stability in Africa. Aligning Western political and economic interests with Africa's priorities is essential for preventing instability. NATO's 2011 Libya operation serves as an example of a failure to build peace and security effectively in the region.

19. While NATO continues to support peace and stability in Africa, China's infrastructure and resource-focused approach reveal different dimensions of geopolitical competition on the continent. China's post-security and post-economic strategies aim to address Africa's needs in complementary ways. Its prioritization of land and railway projects over the security of maritime routes reflects a broader strategy to utilize Africa's natural resources more efficiently.
20. China focuses heavily on economic and energy sectors in Africa. The continent's abundant mineral and energy resources are of particular interest to China. China is expanding its presence in Africa with infrastructure projects and investments to meet its needs.
21. China's "Pax Sinica" concept signifies its aim to establish a new world order beginning from Asia. This vision is part of China's broader strategy to gain global power. The Communist Party of China implements strategic and tactical initiatives through a "golden triangle" model comprising the military, intelligence, and economy. The White Paper, first published in 1998 and updated every two years, outlines China's national security priorities. Its policies shaping China's presence in Africa are a reflection of this doctrine.
22. China's "Night Tiger" units play a significant role in its military operations in Africa. These units are known for their small-scale but highly effective operational activities. By increasing its military presence on the continent, China aims to strengthen its strategic position.
23. The China-Africa Economic Forum, established in 2000, serves as the primary platform for trade relations between the two sides. Between 2000 and 2020, trade volume between China and Africa increased from \$10 billion to \$300 billion, overtaking countries like the United Kingdom and France. Today, China has declared a total investment and project volume in Africa exceeding \$700 billion.
24. Sudan holds a key position in China's strategic objectives in Africa. China has aimed to transform Sudan into the "Dubai of Africa" and has provided significant support to Sudan in the United Nations Security Council. It has also focused on infrastructure projects and energy investments in the country.
25. China and Nigeria maintain strong economic ties. China has procured a significant number of military boats and fighter jets from Nigeria. This relationship highlights China's strategy to strengthen military and economic partnerships in Africa.
26. China's Grand Strategy is based on gaining influence and controlling public debt. Through debt-financing policies, China restricts the financial independence of African nations while expanding its own influence. Western countries view this approach as expansionist and imperialistic. Some organizations are supported by the US and other Western countries to counterbalance China's military presence and mercenary activities in Africa. This initiative is a



strategy to limit China's expansionist moves on the continent.

27. China's relations with Africa date back to 1956 during the Mao Zedong era, initially shaped by ideological export objectives. Since the 1960s, China has implemented an investment-driven economic and security policy on the continent. By 2010, China became Africa's largest trading partner, and approximately 2 million Chinese nationals currently reside on the continent. Between 2021 and 2027, China plans to implement a \$20 billion private investment strategy in Africa, while also developing economic and strategic relations with countries like Djibouti, where a significant portion of public debt is owed to China.
28. Xi Jinping is regarded as China's most important leader since Mao Zedong. Under his leadership, the Communist Party of China aims to become a dominant geopolitical force in Africa. This ambition is perceived as expansionist by the United States and the European Union, prompting Western nations to take military and strategic steps to counteract China's influence. Western countries aim to limit China's expansion in Africa by increasing regional collaborations and their own military presence.
29. While Western interventions continue to limit China's influence in Africa, the paradoxical situation surrounding Africa's energy resources presents another critical dimension of regional geopolitical struggles. Despite its abundant natural resources, many African nations are unable to achieve energy independence or accelerate their economic development. This has led to low levels of modern energy usage and high energy costs across the continent.
30. Nigeria is Africa's largest oil producer and ranks among the top 10 oil-producing nations globally. However, challenges in managing oil reserves have prevented the country from realizing its full potential. This situation underscores the importance of training in carbon emissions control and efficient natural resource management.
31. Despite its vast natural resources, Africa experiences significant disparities in energy access. Energy security in the continent entails ensuring uninterrupted access to energy resources at affordable prices while supporting societal development. However, energy poverty and inadequate electricity infrastructure remain fundamental issues in many parts of Africa.
32. Energy security refers to the sustainable supply of energy resources, maintaining reasonable prices, and utilizing these resources to support societal development. However, access to energy remains a significant challenge in Africa, with 43% of the population still lacking electricity. In terms of per capita modern energy consumption, Africa ranks the lowest globally.
33. The Dangote Oil Refinery Project in Nigeria represents a critical step in addressing Africa's energy security challenges. As the largest oil refinery in Africa, the project aims to utilize Nigeria's energy resources more effectively. Operational since 2024, this refinery was designed to support Africa's energy transition.
34. Türkiye's activities in the energy sector have also drawn international attention. Türkiye is actively exploring oil and natural gas in Somalia's 15,000-square-kilometer maritime territory, aiming to discover and utilize new energy resources in the region.



35. Africa has the potential to become a key player in meeting global energy demand growth. However, how each country addresses its energy needs will depend on social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Efficient use of both renewable and non-renewable energy resources is critical for the continent's future energy independence and development.
36. Africa's energy resources will shape the continent's development and sustainability goals. Meanwhile, Türkiye's evolving security policies in the region add a different dimension to these geopolitical dynamics. Questions arise about whether Türkiye's new security identity and policies in Africa contribute to militarizing the continent or addressing its security problems. Türkiye's security policies are shaped by its political, economic, and social dynamics, aiming to contribute to the resolution of Africa's security challenges.
37. In the post-Cold War era, the concept of security has evolved from focusing solely on military factors to emphasizing individuals' quality of life. Türkiye's security and foreign policy identity has transitioned from a West-oriented approach, driven by issues like the Cyprus conflict, to a multidimensional, economy-based strategy. After 2016, Türkiye's security policies took on a new dimension, influenced by events like the Arab Spring and the failed coup attempt. During this period, Türkiye supported its security strategies in Africa with soft power and humanitarian investments, including grants, hospital construction, and human-centered projects, strengthening cooperation with African countries.
38. After 2016, Türkiye enhanced its relations with Africa in security and military domains. For instance, Türkiye established a major military base in Somalia in 2017, contributing to the formation of the Somali army. Similarly, Türkiye established a military base in Libya and began exporting strategic products such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to African countries. These steps have further solidified Türkiye's security identity in Africa.
39. Türkiye's new security identity in Africa involves expanding its military, political, and economic presence on the continent. This policy encompasses not only economic and social aspects but also security cooperation with African nations. By responding to Africa's security and development needs, Türkiye is taking significant steps toward becoming a regional power.
40. Türkiye's defense industry products, particularly the Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicles, have gained significant demand in Africa. Today, more than 35 countries purchase these products, 20 of which are in Africa. This success is attributed to Türkiye's lack of a colonial past and its non-discriminatory approach in defense product sales. The cooperation between Türkiye and Africa reflects a shared understanding to reduce dependency on Western powers. Since 2005, Türkiye has developed multidimensional strategic relationships with Africa, increasing trade volume from \$5.4 billion in 2003 to over \$40 billion today. The number of Turkish embassies on the continent has risen from 12 to 44 during this period.
41. The bureaucratic politics model has been used to explain Türkiye's dynamics in its relations with Africa. This model suggests that various state institutions influence foreign policy by guiding the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Türkiye's initiatives in Africa aim to achieve not only peace and security but also economic development. Türkiye's Africa policy has been institutionalized through strategic organizations such as TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency), the Yunus Emre Institute, and the Maarif Foundation. Additionally, institutions like Turkish Airlines (THY) and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related



Communities (YTB) have expanded their activities on the continent, playing a significant role in strengthening Türkiye's social, economic, and cultural ties with Africa.

42. Türkiye has provided grants and supported infrastructure projects during its negotiations with countries like Somalia and Sudan. For example, Türkiye signed a grant agreement with Somalia and undertook projects such as the construction of airports and ports. This process was supported by Turkish companies collaborating with the Municipality of Mogadishu, aiming to revitalize trade in the region.
43. Türkiye's strategic approach to political and economic cooperation in Africa contributes to peace and development efforts on the continent, while the growing influence of the concept of diaspora in international relations forms another dimension of this strategic framework. The term "diaspora," derived from the Greek words "dia" (to scatter) and "speria" (seed), initially referred only to exiled communities, but over time it has broadened to encompass migrants, workers, and companies. In today's world, diasporas are considered as forces that can influence national interests on the international stage. While the concept of diaspora in Türkiye is often met with skepticism, it is viewed as an essential tool for raising public awareness of developments in Africa. Diasporas have become structures that reflect economic and political interests, and many countries utilize this influence to advance their national goals. The Turkish diaspora in Africa stands out with its individual achievements. However, despite notable successes, especially in countries like Ethiopia and Somalia, the diaspora has yet to form a unified and organized structure. Strengthening diaspora efforts through the establishment of media and communication platforms could enhance Türkiye's effectiveness in Africa. Additionally, the creation of diaspora attaché offices could serve as a significant step in this direction.
44. African students studying in Türkiye have the potential to act as volunteer ambassadors for Türkiye upon returning to their home countries. These students could play a significant role in enhancing Türkiye's soft power in Africa and supporting the effectiveness of the Turkish diaspora.
45. Türkiye must continuously update its policies to increase its economic and political influence in Africa. The Turkish diaspora's emergence as an active player on the global stage could strengthen Türkiye's position against former colonial powers and new competitors. In this process, strategic partnerships focused on economic assistance, summit collaborations, and a robust ecosystem of intellectual exchange will hold great importance in Türkiye's relations with Africa.

22 November 2024, Istanbul



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1. Afrika'dan Türkiye'ye eğitim için gelen öğrenciler, ülkelerine döndüklerinde Türkiye adına gönüllü elçi olarak görev yapabilirler. Bu öğrenciler, Türkiye'nin Afrika'daki yumuşak gücünü artırabilecek ve Türk diasporasının etkinliğini destekleyecek önemli aktörler olarak değerlendirilmektedir.
2. Türkiye, Afrika'da ekonomik ve siyasi etkisini artırmak için politikasını sürekli güncellemelidir. Türk Diasporası'nın uluslararası arenada etkin bir aktör haline gelmesi, eski sömürgeci ülkeler ve yeni rakipler karşısında daha güçlü bir pozisyon elde etmesine katkı sağlayacaktır. Bu süreçte, Afrika ile ilişkilerde ekonomik yardımların ve ortaklık zirvelerinin yanı sıra düşünce ekosistemi odaklı stratejik iş birlikleri de büyük önem taşımaktadır.

22 Kasım 2024, İstanbul

