

Turkish Military Presence in Africa: An Asset or a Liability?



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Turkey in Africa: a Russian perspective



Map by Ryan Kleisser, Isabel Ivanescu, George Barros, & Madysyn Goodballet
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President Erdogan's visits to Africa



Motives for Turkey's military presence in Africa

- Reacting to global, increasingly militarized, scramble for Africa (Libya, Somalia, Sudan (aborted), the Sahel, etc.).
- Reacting to the formation of an anti-Turkish coalition in Eastern Mediterranean
- A 'pit-stop' on the way to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf
- Regional balancing vis-à-vis the Arab Quartet
- Power projection in the region, incl. in terms of maritime security, counter-piracy and counter-terrorism operations (esp. in the Red Sea & the Gulf of Aden)
- Arms sales and other military services to be supplied by Turkey's booming defense sector (incl. to Sub-Saharan Africa)
- Increase Turkey's weight as conflict mediator (in Libya and elsewhere)

Turkey's military presence in Africa: a liability?

- Key intl. stakeholders interested in Africa (Libya, etc) becoming a quagmire/failure for Turkey
- Turkish objects in Africa have become attractive targets for terrorists, yet victory over terrorism (Al-Shabab, etc.) is nowhere near in sight
- Pro-Turkish governments have become targets of subversion by regional competitors
- Public opinion in European countries usually condemns non-Western military interventions in Africa; may lead to sanctions, etc.
- Practically undermining decolonization agenda in Africa; move away from greater maritime independence & agency of African countries; may lead to the worsening of Turkey's image in Africa
- Turkey kills Muslims in Africa just like Western countries? May undermine Turkey's anti-Western narrative in Africa
- Great financial cost

THANK YOU!



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