

This edition of Türkiye in Focus covers the following topics:

- Researcher Burak Elmalı shares his insights on Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's participation in the NATO Summit in Washington.
- An interview with Abdinor Dahir, Managing Director at Taloford Consulting, discussing the Somalia-Ethiopia talks hosted by Türkiye.
- Researcher İhsan Faruk Kılavuz provides his perspective on the Turkish men's national football team's journey in EURO 2024.

President Erdoğan Attends NATO Summit in Washington

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attended the NATO Summit in Washington from July 9-11. This year's summit was especially noteworthy as it celebrated NATO's 75th anniversary. Leaders from all 32 member countries, including new members Sweden and Finland, participated. The summit also welcomed strategic partners from Australia, South Korea, Japan, and New Zealand, along with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The post-summit declaration identified China and Russia as major threats, highlighting their growing alliance. It also emphasised the allies' commitment to providing Ukraine with at least \$40 billion in military aid over the next year. The perception of China as a significant threat is partly due to its strong economic ties with Russia, described as Moscow's 'economic lifeline.'

During the summit, President Erdoğan engaged in bilateral talks with leaders from Greece, Italy, and Germany. President Erdoğan emphasised the need to pressure Israel to end its attacks on Gaza and to ensure that the emerging ceasefire opportunity is not wasted, and the war should not expand across the region.

For NATO, the partnership between China and Russia, described as a "friendship without limits," poses a significant threat to the alliance. However, it is important to recognise the differing perspectives within NATO on how to address these threats.



(TUR Presidency/ Murat Çetinmühürdar - Anadolu Agency)

For instance, Türkiye has maintained a balanced foreign policy and constructive dialogue in the Russia-Ukraine War, aiming to mediate a ceasefire, contrasting with NATO's broader approach of viewing Russia as an adversary with no room for negotiation. Additionally, while China is labelled as a collective threat, many member countries continue to maintain economic ties based on trade and investment with Beijing.

Overall, this year's NATO Summit underscored the alliance's ongoing efforts to remain relevant in today's world. Future initiatives among allied nations are anticipated in areas such as enhanced operational capabilities and expanded dialogue platforms. The alliance aims to maintain its crucial role in the Atlantic security architecture for the foreseeable future.

Somalia-Ethiopia Talks to Resolve Diplomatic Dispute - Interview with Abdinor Dahir



Abdinor Dahir is Managing Director at Taloford Consulting

Abdinor Dahir is the Managing Director of Taloford Consulting (taloford.com), a research and development consulting firm primarily active in East Africa. He is an eminent expert on Turkish-African relations and frequently provides insights on Horn of Africa regional affairs in various media outlets.

Background: Türkiye's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hakan Fidan, hosted Taye Atske Selassie, Ethiopia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Ahmed Moallim

Fiqi, Somalia's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in Ankara on July 1, 2024. Following their discussions, both parties agreed on the issuance of the "Joint Ankara Statement." This statement outlines the decision by the Foreign Ministers of Ethiopia and Somalia to reconvene in Türkiye on September 2.

Given Türkiye's historical and current involvement with Somalia and its growing ties with Ethiopia, how does Türkiye plan to balance its interests while ensuring an effective mediation process? What specific mediation strategies is Türkiye employing to address the complex issues at hand?

Türkiye has accepted a request from Ethiopia to mediate between Addis Ababa and Mogadishu over a controversial port deal Addis Ababa signed with the breakaway region of Somaliland, which is part of Somalia, in January this year. Türkiye is an indispensable ally of Somalia's state-building agenda, having provided massive humanitarian and development aid to the African country post-2011 devastating famine. They include training and equipping the Somali Security Forces to effectively fight the al-Qaeda-linked terror group, Al Shabaab, and assume the security of the country, particularly following the withdrawal of the African Union Peacekeeping Forces commonly known as ATMIS. Doing so, Ankara has declared its support for Somalia's unity and territorial integrity following the port deal, which the Somali President labelled as a land-grabbing attempt.

On the other hand, Türkiye enjoys strong cordial ties with Ethiopia, having provided material support to Addis Ababa during the Tigray War, eventually leading to negotiations in Pretoria to end the conflict. Further, Türkiye is a leading FDI

source for Ethiopia with Turkish companies investing over 6 billion USD—Türkiye's largest Africa investment—and employing more than 30,000 Ethiopian citizens.

Both Somalia and Ethiopia seem to treat Türkiye as a neutral, capable mediator who understands the issues at stake as well as their concerns. Leveraging on these ties, Ankara seems to protect its interests in the Horn region while helping Mogadishu and Addis explore possible, probable and acceptable opportunities to solve their dispute peacefully and generate mutual gains. In my view, Türkiye is employing logrolling strategy—that is to provide facilitation so that both parties can discuss their issues directly while highlighting risks if opportunities for resolving the dispute are missed.

How might the resolution of the port deal between Somalia and Ethiopia influence regional stability and economic development in the Horn of Africa?

A resolution of the dispute could prevent a renewed Ethio-Somali conflict and avert a regional crisis in the Horn of Africa, which is by far the continent's most violent and unstable part.

Looking beyond the upcoming talks in Ankara, what are the long-term goals of Türkiye's diplomatic efforts in Africa, particularly regarding its role in facilitating peace and cooperation between neighbouring countries with historical disputes? How does Türkiye envision its role in the broader context of African geopolitics?

The current mediation between Somalia and Ethiopia is a recognition of Türkiye's diplomatic capacity. Neutrality is a cornerstone of Türkiye's foreign policy, and the increasing demand for its mediation services underscores this importance.

Going forward, Ankara should collaborate with the African Union—the continental body—and its regional economic communities, such as IGAD with regards to the current mediation. Such collaboration would further enhance African institutions' mediation and conflict resolution capacities, further advancing African solutions for African problems. By leveraging its neutral stance and diplomatic expertise and collaborating with African continental and regional bodies, Türkiye can play a pivotal role in fostering peace and stability across the African continent, strengthening its position as a key global mediator.

EURO 2024: Türkiye's Quarter-Final Journey and National Enthusiasm

The EURO 2024 European Football Championship was filled with unexpected success and moments of excitement for the Turkish National Team. Initially, there were doubts about the team's chances of advancing from the group stage, but they surprised both their fans and football experts by reaching the quarterfinals. Despite a strong performance, they were defeated by the Netherlands in this stage and exited the tournament.

One of the most talked-about incidents of the tournament was Merih Demiral's celebration during the Austria match when he made a grey wolf hand gesture. UEFA's decision to suspend Demiral for two matches ignited a fire of national fervour in Türkiye. Support for Demiral poured in from all corners, uniting



(Emin Sansar - Anadolu Agency)

the Turkish people around their national team. The match against the Netherlands was not just a football game but a 'national cause.'

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan also reacted strongly to UEFA's decision, condemning it as a manifestation of the existing hypocrisy and prejudice against Türkiye in Europe. In a show of solidarity and protest, Erdoğan spontaneously decided to travel to Berlin to watch the quarter-final match in person. His presence further fuelled national enthusiasm and reinforced public support for the team.

Throughout the tournament, Turkish expatriates in Germany were a major source of support for the Turkish National Team. For the Turkish community in Germany, the tournament was an opportunity to connect with their homeland and experience strong national pride. Their deep love and unwavering support for the team were evident in the vibrant celebrations both in the stadiums and on the streets.

The success of the Turkish National Team in this tournament showcased the potential of a new generation of young and talented players. This youthful squad promises a bright future for upcoming tournaments, already stirring excitement among Turkish fans. EURO 2024 will be remembered not just for the sporting achievements but also for the moments that strengthened national unity and pride.

Highlights

- According to a declaration released on Wednesday, Türkiye will host the NATO Summit in 2026.
- A new presidential decree has officially declared July 11 as the "International Day of Reflection and Remembrance of the Srebrenica Genocide."



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