



## The Developing Trade Relations Between Turkey and Africa in the Last Decade: The Case of Somalia

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### ABSTRACT

Today, Africa has become a centre of attraction and power for global actors with its geopolitical location, strategic trade routes, rich energy and underground resources, agricultural potential, growing and developing market. While Turkey's diplomatic relations network in Africa shows its effect in economic, political, and social fields, it also contributes to the development of trade between Turkey and Africa due to the developing economic relations. In this study, the developing trade relations between Turkey and Africa in the last decade, especially the economic and trade relations between Turkey and Somalia are discussed. As a result of the research, it was concluded that the trade between Turkey and Somalia has increased steadily in the last ten years (2011-2020). While the trade volume between the two countries was only \$42 million in 2011, ten years later, in 2020, the volume of foreign trade was \$270.9 million.

**Keywords:** Turkey, Africa, Somalia, Foreign Trade, Import-Export.

### INTRODUCTION

Africa is the second largest continent in the world after Asia, considering the population density and area. The African continent covers 6% of the world's surface area and 24.4% of the world's land area, with an area of 30.8 million km<sup>2</sup>, if many islands of large and small sizes are included in the calculations. In terms of population density, it constitutes 15% of the world's population (Sayre, 1999, p. 6). Africa is surrounded by the Indian Ocean in the south, the Atlantic Ocean in the west, the Mediterranean Sea in the north, the Sinai Peninsula, the Red Sea, and the Suez

Canal in the east. There are 54 independent states, 9 regions, and 3 limited number of recognized states in the continent (Hazar, 2011, p. 2). When all the continents in the world are taken into account, the continent with the youngest population is the African continent. To put it statistically, half of the people living on the African continent are under the age of 19. If we look at the face measurement, according to the size of the countries on the map, the largest country is Algeria. However, Nigeria is the most populous African country in terms of population density (Sayre, 1999, p. 3). It is known that Africa has achieved stable growth rates in the last 10 years and has increased its income from foreign aid and investments. Considering these developments, it is possible to talk about a partial recovery in the continent, but it is seen that these developments have a limited effect on poverty reduction and integration with the world economy (Kızıllarslan, 2009, p. 11). It is generally accepted that Africa needs increased investment and trade opportunities rather than aid. The fact that African countries, which have been neglected until now, are rich in natural resources, especially oil, has recently increased the importance of African countries. Turkey has adopted an export-based growth policy since 1980 (Anyanwu, J. C., 2006, p. 4.) For this reason, Turkey's trade with Africa has become more and more important due to both the "emerging Africa" phenomenon and the export-oriented growth policy adopted by Turkey. In this study, the commercial relations that have developed between Africa and Turkey in the last ten years, especially the economic and trade relations between Somalia and Turkey, have been tried to be revealed.

### **General Information About the African Continent**

Africa lies above the equator with an almost equal extension of south and north. The division of Africa into almost equal parts along the equator causes the climatic and physical conditions in the north to repeat themselves in the south. Africa is the most tropical of all continents. The climate and vegetation range from equatorial rainforests, tropical deserts, and savanna grasslands to the Mediterranean (Tucker, C. J., Townshend, J. R., & Goff, T. E. (1985)). The Sahara Desert, the largest of its kind anywhere in the world, spans approximately 10.4 million km<sup>2</sup> from north to south (Roux, 2013, p. 8). Africa has eight major physical regions: the Sahara, the Sahel, the Ethiopian Highlands, the Savanna, the Swahili Coast, the Rainforest, the African Great Lakes, and South Africa. Some of these regions cover broad bands of the continent such as the Sahara and the Sahel, while others are isolated areas such as the Ethiopian Highlands and the Great Lakes. Each of these regions has its own animal and plant communities (Hazar, 2011, p. 7).

**Figure 1: General Map of the African Continent**

Source: geomap.com

There are not many gulfs in the African continent, which has a geographical structure where natural harbour formations are not experienced because its coasts are naturally flat. The most important island that the continent has is the island of Madagascar, one of the largest islands in the world. It is possible to see the positions of the countries in the continent on the map above (Hazar, 2011, p. 5).

### **Competing Elements in Africa**

It is estimated that the influence of African countries will increase in the 21st century. Although it cannot provide continuity, some of the world's top 10 growing economies are located in the African continent. In addition, it still continues to be the focus of attention with its existing hydrocarbon deposits and rich mines (Ferhavi, 2013a, p. 3).

China and India, which are seen as two rising powers recently, have also joined the competition. Israel, Japan, and Brazil are among the countries that have difficulty in finding a place for themselves in this continent. Italy, on the other hand, continues to exist mostly in North and East Africa. The aim of these countries competing in Africa is to benefit from the economic resources of the continent (Carmody, P. R., & Owusu, F. Y. (2007).. Some countries use military force for their economic and political interests in Africa. The countries that militarily control the strategic places of the African continent are seen as the USA, China, Israel, England, and France. China's relations with Africa, which has developed with the highest economic growth rates in the world in recent years and has become a global actor with its modernized army, draw attention. Although the history of China-Africa relations is more than five hundred years old, relations have never been the same as in the 21st century. China has greatly increased its visibility in the Continent, especially through its economic activities (Anadolu Agency, 2018). Turkey's relations with Africa, one of the areas neglected for many years, are among the most important agenda items of Turkish Foreign Policy today. Africa-Turkey relations, which started to change with the AK (The Justice and Development Party) government that came to power in 2002, has taken its place among the most successful areas of Turkish foreign policy today. Sub-Saharan Africa, which has been struggling with hunger, internal turmoil, and epidemics for many years since the first years of the new government, and therefore often ignored in foreign policy, has also entered Turkey's area of interest (Özkan, 2012, p. 1).

### **Economic and Trade Relations Between Turkey and Africa in General**

Turkey located at a location where Europe, Asia, and Africa meet and has generally followed a Western-oriented foreign policy strategy after the Second World War. Examining the surrounding geographies from a Western perspective, Turkey developed a policy with the current perspective in Africa until the beginning of the 2000s. This approach has started to change since the early 2000s and Turkey has approached African countries with a unique perspective. This change enabled the political and cultural heritage to be combined in a strategic policy (Doğan & Tunç, 2015, p. 3).

As a reflection of the current strategic policy, Turkey's diplomatic relations network, which was established through embassies, has shown its effect in the economic and political field over the years (Hazar, 2012, p. 6). While Turkish investments were shifted to Africa due to the developing economic relations, these relations also contributed to the development of foreign trade. For African countries that do not have the necessary physical infrastructure, Turkey's

investments and aids to the region tend to serve the interests of both parties, unlike Western countries.

In this respect, Turkey differs from Western countries with a colonial past (Karagül & Arslan, 2013, p. 5). In the last fifteen years, Turkey has developed its commercial and economic union with thirty-nine African countries, has invested in twenty-two countries, and abolished the double taxation situation by signing agreements with eleven countries. These agreements show that the relations between Turkey and Africa are in the process of development (Tepeciklioğlu, 2012, p. 6).

**Table 1: African Countries with the Most Foreign Trade with Turkey (2000-2018).**

<b>2000</b>			<b>2018</b>		
<b>Country</b>	<b>Amount (Billion Dollars)</b>	<b>Share (Percent)</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Amount (Billion Dollars)</b>	<b>Share (Percent)</b>
Algeria	1,575	38,5	Egypt	5,243	24,3
Morocco	0,142	3,4	Nigeria	0,489	2,2
Ghana	0,040	0,9	Sudan	0,433	2,0
South Africa	0,242	5,9	South Africa	1,915	8,9
Libya	0,881	21,5	Algeria	3,169	14,7
Egypt	0,515	12,6	Morocco	2,704	12,5
Nigeria	0,177	4,3	Tunisia	1,086	5,0
Sudan	0,031	0,7	Senegal	0,401	1,8
Tunisia	0,226	5,5	Libya	1,865	8,6
Zimbabwe	0,030	0,7	Ethiopia	0,354	1,6
Others	0,254	6,2	Others	3,838	17,7
Total	1,578	100,0	Total	19,822	100,0

Source: Compiled from TURKSTAT data.

*Table 1* shows African Countries with the Most Foreign Trade with Turkey (2000-2018). Considering the year 2000, the country with the highest foreign trade with Turkey is Algeria (38.5%) compared to the whole of Africa, followed by Libya (21.5%). In 2018, Egypt (24.3%) was the country with the most foreign trade with Turkey in Africa, followed by Algeria (14.7%). Likewise, as seen in Table 1, the trade volume between Turkey and Africa, which was 1.578 billion dollars in 2000, reached 19.822 billion dollars in 2018, that is, it increased (1156%).

## **ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE HORN OF AFRICA COUNTRIES**

The Horn of Africa is the easternmost extension of the African continent that includes Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and more broadly Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, and South Sudan. This region has long been described as one of the most conflicted areas in the world. However, today the situation in some countries of the region is improving, countries located in the Horn of Africa are engaged in trade, agriculture, livestock, agro-processing, manufacturing, tourism, industry, construction, etc. areas with investment opportunities. Turkey is one of the many countries that want to take advantage of these opportunities. The search for foreign markets has become an important foreign trade policy, as the current AKP (The Justice and Development Party) government plans to break the middle-income trap and become one of the higher-income countries.

Since the Horn of Africa countries were wholly or partially under Ottoman rule, their relationship with Turkey goes back several centuries. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Turkey-Africa relations generally remained at a low level. In 1998, Turkey developed a new policy called the “Opening to Africa Policy”. This policy formed the basis of bilateral relations developed in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, there are embassies of all countries in the Horn of Africa in Ankara. This is a symbol of how the relationship between Turkey and the Horn of Africa countries developed diplomatically (Ylönen & Záhorkík, 2017, p. 5).

Although it is not possible to compare Turkey's economic ties in Africa in general, and especially in the Horn of Africa, with the Chinese, it is seen that Turkey follows the path of success of the Chinese in its relations with Africans. Unlike China and Western countries, Turkey follows a non-interventionist policy that does not interfere with the internal affairs of African countries and carries out activities that will benefit the economies of African countries. The total trade volume between Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti, and Turkey increased from 100 million USD in 2004 to over 500 million USD in 2020. With 3.2 billion USD in Ethiopia alone, FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) is by far the largest investment in Africa. The first foreign public bank opened by Turkey is in the Horn of Africa. TIKA (Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) and Anadolu Agency have a strong structure in the region.

### Somalia Foreign Trade Statistics

The Somali economy relies heavily on consumption based on imported goods. Imports represent more than 40 percent of GDP, predominantly financed by remittances, while exports represent 10 percent of total GDP. Somalia's trading partners have increased since 2010. The major trading partners listed in Tables 6 and 7 represent more than 80 percent of the total value and volume of exports and imports to Somalia.

**Table 2: Somalia Foreign Trade Statistics for the Last Ten Years (2011-2020, USD)**

Years	Imports	Export	Foreign Volume	Trade Foreign Balance	Trade The ratio of exports to imports
2011	2,201,762,061	477,240,773	2,679,002,834	-1,724,521,288	21.6
2012	3,023,954,041	495,358,646	3,519,312,687	-2,528,595,395	16
2013	3,747,322,791	654,919,168	4,402,241,959	-3,092,403,623	17.4
2014	3,229,885,449	649,974,385	3,879,859,834	-2,579,911,064	20.0
2015	3,360,186,573	723,125,922	4,083,312,495	-2,637,060,651	21.5
2016	3,303,392,534	660,918,250	3,964,310,784	-2,642,474,284	20
2017	2,892,818,590	451,610,848	3,344,429,438	-2,441,207,742	15.6
2018	3,170,000,000	675,000,000	3,845,000,000	-2,495,000,000	21.2
2019	3,700,000,000	525,000,000	4,225,000,000	-3,175,000,000	14.1
2020	3,915,000,000	694,000,000	4,609,000,000	-3,221,000,000	17.7

Source: Compiled from UN COMTRADE & IMF DOTS, CBS 2020 data.

Table 2 shows the trade data for the last decade from 2011 to 2020. According to the figures, both exports and imports are increasing. The reason for this is the improvement in the country's economy, the end of the political transition, the increasing number of direct investments and the increasing number of workers. However, between 2016 and 2017, exports decreased by 9 percent and 32 percent, respectively, due to the severe drought and rainfall in the last quarter of 2016 and the first quarter of 2017. Considering the ratio of exports to imports, this rate was 20 percent in 2016, it decreased to 15.6 percent in 2017. In 2020, Somalia has a foreign trade deficit of more than 3 billion dollars. As a result, livestock prices dropped significantly due to drought and rainfall shortages that started in the country in 2016, and shepherds made forced sales to cope with the effects of the drought.

Livestock exports to the Gulf countries have continued to be Somalia's leading foreign exchange income over time. The lack of diversity in the livestock export market has made the country vulnerable to external shocks from epidemics, resulting in a decline in livestock exports (CBS, 2020). Strong veterinary surveillance and alternative feeding practices are needed to reduce the economy's exposure to shocks from this sector. The ongoing initiative on the Drought

Recovery and Resilience Framework is expected to provide lasting solutions to the repetitive and devastating situations that droughts and floods bring to the economy. On the other hand, while imports showed an increasing trend from year to year, total imports decreased by 12 percent in 2017.

### **Countries with the Most Foreign Trade of Somalia (2011-2020)**

The countries to which Somalia exports the most are Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

**Table 3: Countries to which Somalia Exported Most in the Last Ten Years (2011-2020)**

<b>No</b>	<b>Top Exporting Countries</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Exports</b>
1.	Saudi Arabia	42%
2.	Oman	20%
3.	United Arab Emirates	17%
4.	Yemen	6%
5.	India	4%
6.	Chinese	3%
7.	France	2%
8.	Pakistan	1.3%
9.	Lebanon	1.2%
10.	Djibouti	1%
11.	Others	2.5%

Source: Compiled from UN COMTRADE & IMF DOTS, CBS 2020 data.

Somalia mainly exports cattle and livestock products to Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Oman, and agricultural products, especially vegetables, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, and metals, etc. to the United Arab Emirates.



**Table 4: Countries that Somalia imports the most (2011-2020)**

No	Somalia imports the most from	Percentage of Total Imports
1.	United Arab Emirates	30%
2.	Ethiopia	12%
3.	India	9%
4.	Chinese	7%
5.	Kenya	6%
6.	Oman	6%
7.	Malaysia	2.9%
8.	Pakistan	2.8%
9.	Yemen	2.5%
10.	Turkey	2.5%
11.	Others	19.3%

Source: Compiled from UN COMTRADE & IMF DOTS, CBS 2020 data.

The countries that Somalia imports the most are the United Arab Emirates (30%), Ethiopia (12%), India (9%), and China (7%). Kenya and Oman have a share of 6% in Somalia's imports. The most imported products by Somalia are raw sugar, rice, palm oil, wheat flour, cars, spare parts, clothing and shoes, electronics, and construction materials.

### **TURKEY AND SOMALIA TRADE RELATIONS**

The Turkish Embassy in Somalia was opened in 1979, but was closed in 1991 due to the civil war that broke out in Somalia. Due to the drought that broke out in Somalia in 2011, Turkey provided aid worth 201 million US dollars to many regions most affected by drought, especially the capital Mogadishu. The Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu was reopened on 1 November 2011. The Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu was one of the first embassies opened in the country after the civil war. Today, the relations between the two countries are highly developed and Turkey carries out many infrastructure and aid projects in the country with the cooperation of the Somali government. When relations between the two states resumed after 20 years, an environment of cooperation was created between the two peoples (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

Many Somali businessmen who import goods from Middle Eastern countries, China and some African countries now make agreements with companies in Turkey and bring imported goods

from Turkey. Many businessmen living abroad and originally from Somalia came to Turkey to buy real estate, while at the same time establishing foreign trade relations with companies in Turkey, they exported Turkish goods abroad. Many Turkish companies found the opportunity to increase their exports to Somalia when the trade door between Somalia and Turkey was opened. It has been observed that there has been an increase of up to 80 percent in the exports of Turkish companies to Somalia in the last 10 years (TC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

On the other hand, the exports of Somali companies to Turkey have not increased much in the last 10 years, and when the increase in their exports is considered, it is seen that this increase is only 30 percent. The reason for this is that Somalia has not yet become a fully reliable country. Despite security concerns, the trade volume between the two countries has grown steadily over the last 10 years. When the security problems disappear in the future, the foreign trade volume between the two countries is expected to increase rapidly (TC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

### **Main Products Subject to Foreign Trade Between Turkey and Somalia**

The main products that Turkey exports to Somalia are; pastas and couscous, wheat flour, sunflower and cotton seeds, dried legumes, and drugs prepared for use in treatment (TC Ministry of Commerce, 2021).

**Table 5: Main Products Exported by Turkey to Somalia**

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1. Pastas and couscous
2. construction iron
3. Wheat flour
4. Cottonseed oils, safflower, sunflower, and their fractions (not chemically modified)
5. Medicines prepared for use in treatment or prevention (dose)
6. Tampons and sanitary towels, similar sanitary articles, and diapers
7. prefabricated buildings
8. Other furniture and parts thereof
9. Bulldozers, mechanical ploughs, excavators, road rollers, graders, soil levellers, scrapers, etc.
10. Tatlı bisküvi ve Gofretler
11. Sheet, bar, or iron, etc., of steel prepared for use in construction.
12. Reagents used in laboratories, diagnostics

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13. Motor vehicles for the transport of goods
  14. Soil, metal ore, stone, etc. Sorting, sorting, sifting, burning, separating, grinding, crushing, kneading, moulding etc. machines.
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Source: trademap

In addition, rebar, prefabricated structures, furniture and its parts, bulldozers, mechanical plows, excavators, road rollers, graders, soil levellers, scrapers, steel sheet, bar, or iron, etc. prepared for use in construction. materials, motor vehicles for the transport of goods, soil, metal ore, stone, etc. sorting, sieving, burning, separating, grinding, crushing, kneading, moulding etc. machines are among the main products exported from Turkey to Somalia.

The products imported by Turkey from Somalia are; Lacquers are natural gums, resins, other oil seeds and fruits, metal extraction, essential oils, oil resins obtained by extraction and terpene by-products. These products are given in detail in *Table 6*.

**Table 6: Main Products Imported by Turkey from Somalia**

1	Other oilseeds and fruits
2	Lacquer natural gums, resins and oil resins and gum resins (such as rosewood)
3	Raw hides and skins of equine animals and cattle (including buffalo)
4	Essential oils, extracted oil resins, resinoids and terpene by-products, solutions

Kaynak: trademap

Trade between Turkey and Somalia has gradually increased in the last 10 years. Turkey is the party with foreign trade surplus in bilateral trade. In *Table 7*, the last 10-year period between 2011-2020 shows the size of the trade between the two countries.

**Table 7: Turkey's Foreign Trade with Somalia (Between 2011-2020-USD)**

Years	Export	Imports	Foreign balance	trade Foreign volume	trade The ratio of exports to imports (%)
2011	39.547.534	2.464.966	37.082.568	42.012.500	1.600
2012	43.751.202	1.163.423	42.587.779	44.914.625	3.762
2013	58.314.799	1.051.799	57.263.000	59.366.598	5.548
2014	62.119.434	1.522.895	60.596.539	63.642.329	4.081
2015	71.034.857	1.343.361	69.691.496	72.378.218	5.289
2016	115.886.628	2.156.056	113.730.572	118.042.684	5.375

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2017	142.945.971	1.030.152	141.915.819	143.976.123	13.878
2018	181.368.808	5.842.264	175.526.544	187.211.072	3.104
2019	244.420.999	6.398.589	238.022.410	250.819.588	3.820
2020	266.142.490	4.802.387	261.340.103	270.944.877	5.542

Source: Compiled from **Turkish Statistical Institute-TurkStat** (2021) data.

Trade between Turkey and Somalia has gradually increased in the last 10 years. Turkey is the party with foreign trade surplus in bilateral trade. In the last ten years, Turkey's exports to Somalia increased from USD 39,547,534 in 2011 to USD 266,142,490 in 2020, showing an approximately 8-fold increase. Somalia's exports to Turkey, on the other hand, increased from 2,464,966 USD in 2011 to 4,802,387 USD in 2020, thus nearly doubling in a 10-year period. As can be seen, Turkey's exports have increased both in quantity and value compared to Somalia, and have increased 4 times more in 10 years.

Foreign trade volume of 42 million dollars in 2011; it reached \$44 million in 2012. Foreign trade volume, which was 72 million dollars in 2015, exceeded 100 million dollars in 2016 and reached 118 million dollars. In 2017, it increased by 21% compared to 2016 and reached the level of 143 million dollars. Most recently, the bilateral trade volume between Somalia and Turkey was 270 million USD in 2020 (imports: 4 million USD; exports: 266 million USD (Turkish Statistical Institute-TurkStat). Products that have an important place in Turkey's exports to Somalia are pasta, sugar, prefabricated structures, medical devices, motor vehicles and medicines. Various animal skins and leather travel goods have an important place in Turkey's import from Somalia.

## CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

Turkey stands out as a rising power in Africa's development story. The fact that Turkey does not have a colonial past on the continent distinguishes it from other powers, and in this way, its relationship with African countries also contributes positively to its image. One of the most concrete indicators of the strengthening Turkey-Africa relations is the developing economic relations and the exponentially increasing trade figures.

While Turkey's total trade volume with Africa was 5.4 billion USD in 2003, it increased to 25.3 billion USD in 2020. The trade volume between Turkey and Sub-Saharan African countries, on the other hand, was 1.35 billion USD in 2003 and reached 10 billion USD in 2020.

On the other hand, commercial relations between Turkey and Somalia have increased rapidly in the last ten years and have made significant progress. In the trade between Turkey and Somalia, Turkey is the country with a foreign trade surplus. The foreign trade volume between the two countries, which was 42 million dollars in 2011, it reached approximately \$45 million in 2012. Foreign trade volume, which was 72 million dollars in 2015, exceeded 100 million dollars in 2016 and reached 118 million dollars. In 2017, it increased by 21% compared to 2016 and reached 143.7 million dollars.

Most recently, the bilateral trade volume between Somalia and Turkey was approximately 271 million USD in 2020 (Turkey's exports to Somalia were more than 266 million USD, while Somalia's exports to Turkey were approximately 5 million USD in the same year). As a result of the development of commercial relations between the two countries, many Somali foreign trade companies that import goods from some Arab countries, African countries, and China have started to import goods from Turkey. Today, it is seen that the market for Turkish goods has expanded in many sectors in Somalia. Thus, there has been a significant increase in Turkey's exports to Somalia.

On the other hand, Somalia's exports to Turkey did not increase much. The biggest reason for this is the lack of confidence in the country. Another reason is that the economic situation of Somalia is generally based on agriculture and animal husbandry and export products are very limited. In addition, the very insufficient level of industrialization is one of the other effective reasons. As a result of the establishment of an environment of trust in the country, it is expected that Turkish investments will increase and the trade between the two countries will gain momentum.

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