



• ANALYSIS

Nigeria-Türkiye Partnership In A Multipolar Era: Symbiotic Necessity In A Fragmented Global Order

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NIGERIA-TÜRKİYE PARTNERSHIP IN A MULTIPOLAR ERA: SYMBIOTIC NECESSITY IN A FRAGMENTED GLOBAL ORDER

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This analysis examines the transformation of Nigeria–Türkiye relations from conventional diplomatic cooperation into a strategic necessity in an era marked by the transition of the global system toward multipolarity, focusing on the axes of defence industry cooperation, energy security, trade, institutionalization, and human capital.

SUMMARY

The study argues that as unipolarity erodes and a multipolar order consolidates, the Nigeria-Türkiye relationship has shifted from conventional diplomacy to a strategic necessity between two middle powers. Nigeria - seeking security modernization, infrastructure development, and strategic autonomy - finds in Türkiye a third-way partner able to deliver technology, capacity-building, and flexible cooperation frameworks. Türkiye, advancing its Africa Partnership Policy, views Nigeria as a diplomatic and economic multiplier across ECOWAS and the African Union, while both countries share a reformist outlook on global governance captured by the doctrine “The World is Bigger Than Five.”

Grounded in Middle Power Theory and South-South Cooperation, the study uses qualitative thematic analysis of policy documents, trade statistics, and defense industry reporting. It traces the historical trajectory from early diplomatic ties to acceleration under Türkiye’s Africa Opening and the upgrade to a strategic partnership. A major turning point is identified in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s Ankara visit on Jan. 27, 2026, when nine memoranda were signed. These agreements are framed as a package logic that broadens cooperation beyond trade and defense into education, human mobility, standards, strategic communication, diplomacy academy coordination, and social policy, moving the relationship toward institutionalization. The report highlights JETCO as the key implementation engine that can translate summit momentum into sus-

tained technical follow-up and raise bilateral trade toward a \$5 billion medium-term target.

Defense cooperation is presented as the most dynamic pillar in 2024-2025. Facing insurgency, banditry, and maritime insecurity, Nigeria benefits from Türkiye's rapid procurement, training, maintenance ecosystems, and technology-transfer posture. Platforms and systems across air, land, and maritime domains are discussed as enabling a more autonomous Nigerian security architecture and reducing reliance on intermittent external interventions. Energy cooperation is framed around Türkiye's diversification needs and Nigeria's "Decade of Gas," emphasizing LNG flexibility, potential upstream joint ventures, and the strategic implications of contract expirations. The report also notes manufacturing investments by Turkish firms in Nigeria, AfCFTA-linked market access, large-scale construction projects, and financial reforms - while identifying risks such as logistics bottlenecks, currency volatility, visa and bureaucracy hurdles, and sensitivities surrounding FETÖ-related issues. It concludes with recommendations to institutionalize high-level coordination, deepen joint ventures in energy and defense manufacturing, build local-currency settlement mechanisms, expand agricultural technology transfer, and strengthen mobility and shipping corridors.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary geopolitical landscape is defined by the steady erosion of unipolarity and the emergence of a multipolar system where “Middle Powers” exert unprecedented influence. Within this context, the relationship between Nigeria, the “Giant of Africa,” and Türkiye, a “Transcontinental Middle Power,” has transcended traditional diplomatic protocols to become a structural necessity. Nigeria seeks to modernize its security apparatus and infrastructure while maintaining strategic autonomy and Türkiye, through its Africa Partnership Policy, is advancing its relations with the continent on a layered partnership basis that integrates diplomatic, economic, and security dimensions. This study provides an analysis of the defense, energy, economic and institutional pillars that underpin this axis. By late 2025, the partnership has matured into a blueprint for South-South cooperation, characterized by high-technology exchange, diversified energy corridors and a shared vision for global governance reform summarized by the doctrine “The World is Bigger Than Five”.¹

This study is grounded in the intersection of Middle Power Theory and South-South Cooperation (SSC). Within a multipolar global order, Nigeria and Türkiye function as “middle powers” leveraging regional influence to pursue strategic autonomy. By utilizing middle power diplomacy that is characterized by niche mediation and coalition-building—both states transcend traditional North-South hierarchies. Viewed through the lens of SSC, this partnership em-

¹ Tolga Yanik and Gokhan Ergocun, “Türkiye’s defence, Aviation Exports Exceed \$10B Threshold in 2025,” Anadolu Agency, January 2, 2026.

phasizes mutual benefit and the diversification of dependencies, enabling both nations to assert agency and reshape regional security and economic architectures independent of what Great Power dictates.

This study adopts a qualitative analytical approach, utilizing thematic analysis of primary and secondary sources, including policy documents, trade statistics, and defense industry reporting. To ensure academic rigor, the research synthesizes data and peer-reviewed literature published between 2021 and 2026. This methodological triangulation allows for a comprehensive assessment of how defense cooperation and diplomatic alignment serve as strategic instruments for both regional powers.

HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY AND GEOPOLITICAL RAPPROCHEMENT

The diplomatic architecture connecting Türkiye and Nigeria has evolved through distinct phases of strategic maturation. While official relations were established in 1962, shortly after Nigeria's independence, the modern phase of rapprochement gained momentum when Türkiye declared 2005 the "Year of Africa." This policy was not only an economic venture but a long-term geopolitical pivot designed to diversify Türkiye's international alliances. The elevation of the relationship to strategic partner status in 2021 marked a definitive shift from transactional trade to a comprehensive security and developmental alignment.² In the current era of global volatility, both nations find themselves navigating a world where traditional Western-led systems are increasingly contested. Nigeria's role as the dominant power in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its leadership within the African Union (AU), provides Türkiye with a diplomatic multiplier in the Global South.⁴ Conversely, Türkiye's burgeoning defense industrial complex and its role as a bridge between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East offer Nigeria a "third-way" alternative to the often-restrictive conditions of Western or Eastern blocs.

CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's visit to Ankara on Jan. 27, 2026, and his meeting with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan marked an important threshold for Türkiye-Nigeria relations moving the partnership beyond goodwill and episod-

² Muideen Olaniyi, "Nigeria, Turkey Sign 8 Pacts On Energy, Defence, Mining, Others," Daily Trust via AllAfrica, October 21, 2021. See also, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), "Unpacking Turkey's Security Footprint in Africa: Trends and Implications for the EU," June 2022, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2022C42_Turkey_Security_Africa.pdf.

ic agendas toward a more institutionalized framework. The nine memorandum signed in the presence of the two leaders reflect an approach that does not confine cooperation to a single sector. Instead, they present a broader package that combines human capital, economic standard-setting, strategic communication, security cooperation, and institutional capacity transfer under one umbrella.³

This package logic has two key implications. First, the Türkiye-Nigeria relationship is no longer being built only through trade and defense, but also through social linkages, standards, and institutional learning. Second, if these documents translate into functioning follow-up mechanisms, the mutually declared medium-term objective-raising bilateral trade toward the \$5 billion level- becomes more realistic. In this sense, the decision to establish a Joint Economic and Trade Commission (JETCO) stands out as one of the most critical items in the package, because it can serve as the primary implementation engine that keeps momentum alive beyond summit diplomacy.⁴

The most lasting impact of the visit is likely to be felt in the institutional frameworks created in education and human mobility. Education is a strategic investment area precisely because it is less vulnerable to short-term political fluctuations and because it produces elites over time. In this context, the MoUs in higher education and broader education cooperation have the potential to expand not only student numbers, but also long-term outcomes such as shared professional memory, institutional trust, and network-building between the two countries.

The social backbone of this track is formed by students and the diaspora. Publicly available statements point to a sizeable Nigerian student community in Türkiye, alongside a strong presence in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). This matters because what makes education diplomacy strategically valuable in the Türkiye-Nigeria context is not only scholarship holders, but the wider ecosystem created by both scholarship recipients and self-funded students.

Türkiye's practical objective is not to "punish education", but to build a transparent, accountable educational environment that is compatible with state-to-state trust. In this sense, cooperation against networks that Türkiye designates as affiliated with FETÖ is a sensitive and complex agenda - one that



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3 İletişim Başkanlığı, "Türkiye ile Nijerya arasında 9 anlaşma imzalandı, 27 Ocak 2026, <https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/haberler/detay/turkiye-ile-nijerya-arasinda-9-anlasma-imzalandi-27-01-26> (Accessed: 28 January 2026); Özcan Yıldırım, "Türkiye, Nigeria sign 9 agreements following leaders' meeting in Ankara", Anadolu Ajansı, 27 Ocak 2026.

4 Presidential Villa State House, "We Are Targeting \$5billion Trade Volume With Nigeria – President Erdogan", State House of Nigeria, January 28, 2026, <https://statehouse.gov.ng/we-are-targeting-5billion-trade-volume-with-nigeria-president-erdogan/>, (Accessed: 28 January 2026).

intersects Türkiye's security concerns with Nigeria's sovereignty, domestic legal framework, and internal stability priorities. Tinubu's visit therefore creates an opportunity to move this file toward a more open, more institutional, and more results-oriented basis.

The most workable dimension in practice is a governance and transfer model that prioritizes the continuity of education under safer and more credible frameworks, rather than a simplistic closure logic. If managed carefully, such an approach can acknowledge Türkiye's security sensitivities while remaining compatible with Nigeria's sovereignty and domestic-order priorities. The core requirement is to avoid reducing the issue to a single political debate and instead manage it through institutional coordination, legal frameworks, accreditation, and a calibrated communication strategy.

The MoU in media and communication should be read as more than media cooperation. Under current conditions, it is fundamentally about strategic communication, an area that directly shapes state capacity. In environments marked by security crises, social fault lines, and digital manipulation, disinformation can erode public order and institutional legitimacy. Türkiye's accumulated experience in strategic communication, public diplomacy, and counter-disinformation efforts can therefore be more than a technical transfer. It can serve as a multiplier for social resilience and institutional trust in Nigeria.

The real value here will not be in producing joint messaging, but in developing concrete tools together. Crisis communication protocols, training programs, public diplomacy, combating disinformation, verification capacities, and sustained inter-agency coordination.

Making trade targets sustainable requires more than increasing volume. It depends on standards, certification, and institutional coordination. For this reason, JETCO is strategically important. It can shift the relationship from ad hoc, project-based engagement toward regular technical follow-up and performance monitoring.

The halal accreditation MoU is also a meaningful component of this standardization agenda. Such arrangements build quality infrastructure that enables food and agricultural products to move more predictably and with clearer compliance mechanisms. At the same time, given the scale of Nigeria's agriculture-livestock ecosystem, this item signals potential openings for new sectors and deeper B2B partnerships within the broader economic relationship.⁵

The defense MoU can easily be reduced in public debate to weapons transfer. That would be a narrow reading. The strategic value of this visit lies in Türkiye's position as a partner capable of offering a comprehensive package. Training,

⁵ "Mukhtar Unveils Livestock Investment Master Plan to Drive National Prosperity", Federal Ministry of Livestock Development, September 19, 2025, <https://fimd.gov.ng/news-details/45>, (Accessed: 28 January 2026)

technology, operational experience, flexible procurement/production pathways, and a maintenance ecosystem. In Nigeria's long-running, multi-layered security struggle – especially against threats such as Boko Haram and ISWAP durable impact emerges only when institutional sustainability is built.

Accordingly, defense cooperation becomes strategically meaningful only insofar as it is converted into a functioning, long-term process covering maintenance, training, doctrine, inventory management, and inter-institutional coordination. This perspective also corrects the simplistic claim that “Türkiye only sells weapons.” The more accurate frame is that Türkiye supports Nigeria through capacity-building and system development-supporting Nigerian institutions operate and sustain capabilities over time.

The MoU between diplomacy academies is a long-term instrument that can bring the two countries closer in foreign policy practice and crisis-management culture-making it easier, over time, to speak the same language. Such mechanisms also facilitate smoother coordination in defense and economic files, because the sustainability of a partnership often depends on the quality of institutional communication behind technical dossiers.

The agreement in family and social policy, meanwhile, underscores the growing visibility of the societal dimension in the relationship. In a country with a population of roughly 235 million, social policy is not merely a humanitarian field. It is strategically connected to youth governance, societal resilience, and development performance. Including this area in the broader package indicates an intention to deepen the partnership not only at the state-to-state level, but also across societal foundations.

Taken together, the nine memoranda signed on Jan. 27, 2026, indicate that Türkiye-Nigeria relations are entering a new phase. The goal is not simply to produce standalone agreements, but to establish an institutional architecture that spans education, strategic communication, standards, and security cooperation. The success of this architecture will be measured less by how many documents were signed and more by how many mechanisms are activated throughout 2026.

If JETCO meets regularly, if education-diaspora channels are strengthened through transparent trust-building frameworks, if strategic communication cooperation yields tangible capacity-sharing, and if defense cooperation is anchored in sustainable maintenance and training structures, this visit will be remembered not as a diplomatic photo-op but as a genuine turning point-demonstrating how two middle powers can build shared horizons in the evolving geopolitics of the 21st century.



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STRATEGIC RECALIBRATION AND DEFENSE INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION: A PARADIGM SHIFT IN SECURITY AUTONOMY

The most dynamic pillar of the Nigeria-Türkiye partnership in the 2024–2025 period is the defence sector. Nigeria faces a complex, multi-dimensional security crisis ranging from the northeast insurgency of Boko Haram and ISWAP to widespread banditry in the northwest and sophisticated piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.⁶ Historically, Nigeria's military modernization efforts have been hampered by the "conditional diplomacy" of other partners. Specifically, the invocation of the Leahy Law and concerns over human rights have led to protracted delays or outright denials of essential hardware, such as the yearslong holdup of A-29 Super Tucano aircraft by the United States.⁷ Türkiye has effectively filled this strategic vacuum by adopting a pragmatic, "no-strings-attached" defense policy.⁸ Unlike Western counterparts, Türkiye prioritizes rapid procurement cycles and, crucially, a willingness to engage in technology transfer and domestic maintenance partnerships. This approach, exemplified by the \$10 billion milestone in Turkish defense exports in 2025, has positioned Türkiye as the preferred strategic partner for Nigeria, providing "Tier-1" capabilities without the traditional bureaucratic or political impediments associated with Euro-Atlantic defense contractors.⁹

The strategic convergence of Turkish technological prowess and Nigerian military requirements has fundamentally redefined the security landscape of West Africa, as Nigeria is increasingly positioned as a regional security anchor with unprecedented operational reach. By integrating Turkish hardware across all the three Services, the Nigerian Armed Forces have transitioned from a traditionally defensive posture to a highly sophisticated, technology-driven force capable of projecting power well beyond its borders. This expansion is part of a broader trend in which Türkiye's defense and aviation exports surpassed the \$10 billion threshold in 2025, driven largely by high-demand platforms in the African market.¹⁰

In the maritime domain, the strategic acquisition of high-endurance Off-shore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) from Dearsan Shipyard represents a transformative

6 "Nigeria Set to Receive Two Turkish-Made Patrol Vessels in 2025," *Defense Mirror*, January 6, 2025.

7 Lauren Ploch Blanchard, "Nigeria: Current Issues and U.S. Policy," Congressional Research Service, September 17, 2021, 2. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10174>, (Accessed: 26 January 2026).

8 Kurç, Çağlar. "No Strings Attached: Understanding Turkey's Arms Exports to Africa." *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2024, pp. 378-95, doi:10.1080/19448953.2023.2236515.; See also Mamouni, K. Türkiye: An Emerging Middle Power in Africa. Policy Center for the New South, Sept. 2025.; See also, Langan, Mark. "Virtuous Power Turkey? The Humanitarian and Enterprising Foreign Policy in Africa." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 9, 2016, pp. 1598-1614, doi:10.1080/01436597.2016.1154444.

9 Tolga Yanik and Gokhan Ergocun, "Türkiye's Defense, Aviation Exports Exceed \$10B Threshold in 2025," Anadolu Agency, January 2, 2026.

10 Yanik and Ergocun, "Türkiye's Defense, Aviation Exports."

leap in Nigeria's capacity to secure the Gulf of Guinea.¹¹ While the project has periodically entered phases of rigorous evaluation and administrative review, reflecting the complexity of integrating such advanced systems into the national fleet, the operational vision for these vessels remains a cornerstone of Nigeria's naval modernization. Equipped with localized UAV launch and recovery capabilities, these OPVs are designed to facilitate continuous Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), effectively deterring the piracy and illegal bunkering that have historically destabilized regional trade. This maritime revitalization not only safeguards domestic oil infrastructure but also positions Nigeria as the primary guarantor of security for the West African littoral. By internalizing these capabilities, Nigeria is effectively reducing the region's structural reliance on intermittent Western naval interventions, thereby asserting its role as a decisive regional power.

The integration of the T129 ATAK helicopters, equipped with Turkish-made precision munitions, has fundamentally recalibrated the Nigerian Air Force's (NAF) operational efficacy in domestic counterterrorism missions. By enabling high-precision strikes with minimal collateral damage, these platforms allow the NAF to operate within densely contested environments where traditional aerial bombardment was historically precluded. This capability is synergized with a growing fleet of other Turkish defense equipment to institutionalize a "Total Spectrum" doctrine; a paradigm shift that seamlessly merges persistent Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) with immediate kinetic response.¹²

Crucially, this modernization is anchored by a deep-seated institutional shift rather than mere hardware acquisition. The extensive technical training provided to Nigerian pilots and engineers in Türkiye, ensures the long-term sustainability of these sophisticated platforms while systematically reducing operational dependency on foreign contractors.¹³ By providing these high-tier capabilities and localized expertise without the political conditionality or bureaucratic delays typical of traditional Western suppliers, Türkiye has enabled Nigeria to bypass historical bottlenecks. The result is a more autonomous and resilient security



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11 Dearsan Shipyard, "Official Handover and Technical Review of High-Endurance OPVs for the Nigerian Navy," May 20, 2025, <https://www.dearsan.com/en/news/handover-nigeria>. (Accessed: 26 January 2026); Dearsan Shipyard, "The 2nd OPV for the Nigerian Navy Launched," accessed January 23, 2026, <https://www.dearsan.com/en/the-2nd-opv-for-the-nigerian-navy-launched/>, (Accessed: 26 January 2026).

12 "Nigerian Air Force Inducts Final Batch of T129 ATAK Helicopters," Military Africa, January 15, 2025.

13 Nigerian Air Force, "HMOD Affirms FG'S Commitment to Strengthening NAF'S Operational Capacity to Combat Emerging Threats," December 4, 2024, <https://airforce.mil.ng/news/hmod-affirms-fgs-commitment-to-strengthening-nafs-operational-capacity-to-combat-emerging-threats>, (Accessed: 26 January 2026).

architecture, offering a persistent deterrent against non-state actors in Nigeria and across the Sahel.

On the other hand, the Nigerian Army (NA) has strategically transitioned toward Turkish defense solutions to bolster its operational efficacy in asymmetric theaters across the northeast and northwest. Central to this modernization is “Project Guardian,” which integrated Bayraktar TB2 UCAVs into the NA to provide persistent surveillance and precision-strike capabilities against insurgent



This aerial superiority is anchored on the ground by a robust fleet of Turkish armoured vehicles, most notably the Otokar Cobra, a light 4x4 reconnaissance cornerstone for over a decade and the recently integrated Nurol Makina Yörük (NMS) 4x4, deployed to secure high-risk transit arteries like the Abu-ja-Kaduna highway.

strongholds.¹⁴ This aerial superiority is anchored on the ground by a robust fleet of Turkish armoured vehicles, most notably the Otokar Cobra, a light 4x4 reconnaissance cornerstone for over a decade and the recently integrated Nurol Makina Yörük (NMS) 4x4, deployed to secure high-risk transit arteries like the Abu-ja-Kaduna highway.¹⁵ To bridge tactical intelligence gaps, the NA employs Havelan’s BAHA and STM’s Togan mini-UAVs for sub-cloud reconnaissance, ensuring localized situational awareness in challenging environments.⁴ Furthermore, the deployment of the Asisguard Songar, equipped with stabilized machine guns and grenade launchers and STM’s ALPAGU loitering munitions has decentralized precision engagement, allowing infantry to suppress “bandit” enclaves with organic, high-precision close-air support.^{16,17} By incorporating these man-portable and modular Turkish technologies, the NA has successfully compressed the “reconnaissance-strike” loop, providing tactical commanders with the surgical tools necessary to neutralize sophisticated non-state actors in modern conflict zones.¹⁸

The defence-industrial synergy between Türkiye and Nigeria is deeply rooted in domestic policy alignment, specifically reinforcing Nigeria’s Executive Order 5, which seeks to prioritize local content and boost indigenous industrial capacity.¹⁹ By offering comprehensive technical training and maintenance expertise such as the programs established for the Nigerian Navy’s offshore patrol vessels and the Air Force’s rotary-wing fleet, Turkish firms empower Nigeria to maintain

14 Defense Mirror, “Nigeria Procures 43 Bayraktar TB2 Drones to Boost North-West Security,” December 20, 2024. See also, Odeniyi, Solomon. “Army Acquires 43 Drones, Wings 46 Turkey-Trained Personnel.” Punch Newspapers, 26 June 2024, punchng.com/army-acquires-43-drones-wings-46-turkey-trained-personnel/.

15 “Nigeria: Military Strength and Turkish Defense Acquisitions,” Military Africa, November 10, 2023. See also, TRT Afrika, “How Türkiye-Nigeria security ties help tackle terror and redefine engagement,” August 5, 2025.

16 “Nigerian Army Expands Tactical Drone Fleet with Turkish Asisguard Songar,” Defense News, August 11, 2024.

17 “Counter-Banditry: Army Deploys New Tactical Technologies in North West,” Daily Trust, January 5, 2025.

18 “Precision Strike: STM Loitering Munitions and the Future of Nigerian Infantry Operations,” Military Africa, November 28, 2024.

19 Federal Government of Nigeria, “Presidential Executive Order No. 5 for Planning and Execution of Projects, Promotion of Nigerian Content in Contracts and Science, Engineering and Technology,” Official Gazette, February 2, 2018, <https://osgf.gov.ng/storage/app/media/pdf/PRESIDENTIAL-EXECUTIVE-ORDER-5.compressed.pdf>, (Accessed: 26 January 2026).

operational readiness independently of foreign contractors. This shift transcends simple procurement, representing a profound evolution in South-South cooperation where technology transfer and rapid delivery cycles are prioritized over the paternalistic donor-recipient dynamics of the past.²⁰

As Nigeria successfully deploys these sophisticated Turkish-made systems to neutralize internal threats and secure the Gulf of Guinea, its strategic stature within the ECOWAS is being fundamentally recalibrated. The emergence of a more autonomous Nigeria, underpinned by a robust defense-industrial relationship with Türkiye and a shared professional lexicon, serves as the foundation for a more resilient West African security architecture. Ultimately, this partnership serves as a tangible manifestation of the “The World is Bigger than Five” dictum, it signifies that for emerging powers, strategic autonomy is no longer merely diplomatic rhetoric, but a lived reality in the evolving geopolitical landscape of the 21st century.

NIGERIA-TÜRKİYE ENERGY AND TRADE COOPERATION: ECONOMIC AND GEOPOLITICAL REALIGNMENT (2024–2030)

The structural transformation of the global energy landscape, precipitated by the intersection of geopolitical volatility and the imperative for decarbonization, has elevated the bilateral relationship between Nigeria and Türkiye to a level of unprecedented strategic significance. As middle powers seeking to maximize their regional influence, Türkiye as a transcontinental energy hub and Nigeria as an African energy titan, the two countries have moved beyond the traditional buyer-seller paradigm to forge an integrated partnership characterized by shared risk, industrial synergy and long-term resource security. This evolution is particularly visible in the 2024–2025 window, as Türkiye’s state-owned energy company, BOTAŞ, aggressively diversifies its portfolio to mitigate the risks associated with historical dependencies on pipeline gas from Russia and Iran, while Nigeria simultaneously implements its “Decade of Gas” initiative to monetize its vast offshore reserves.²¹

The strategic importance of the Nigeria-Türkiye energy axis is amplified by the approaching expiration of several major long-term pipeline contracts between 2026 and 2028, specifically, Russia and Iran are nearing their conclusion, providing BOTAŞ with a critical window of opportunity to renegotiate terms

²⁰ Premium Times. 2024. “How Nigeria-Türkiye Defence Ties Boost Local Content and Security.” December 12, 2024.

²¹ Mehmet İvgin and Tufan Demirel, “Advancing Sustainable Energy Security in Türkiye: Geopolitical and Policy Perspectives”, Sustainability, MPDI, January 20, 2026, <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/17/20/9264>; eRDAL Tanas Karagöl, et.al., “National Energy and Mining Policy of Turkey”, *SETA Analysis*, No:35, July 2017.

from a position of strength or to replace these volumes with liquefied natural gas (LNG).²² Nigeria, as a reliable base-load LNG supplier, provides the necessary volume and flexibility to facilitate this transition. The geographic distance, once a barrier, is now mitigated by Türkiye's massive investment in Floating Storage and Regasification Units (FSRUs) and traditional LNG terminals like those at Marmara Ereğlisi, Aliğa, and Saros.



The geographic distance, once a barrier, is now mitigated by Türkiye's massive investment in Floating Storage and Regasification Units (FSRUs) and traditional LNG terminals like those at Marmara Ereğlisi, Aliğa, and Saros.

BOTAŞ maintains a historical and ongoing supply relationship with Nigeria LNG (NLNG) that serves as the cornerstone of Türkiye's base-load LNG profile. While spot-market purchases vary by quarter, the long-term agreements with Nigeria have historically provided a cushion during periods of pipeline disruption or price spikes in the European gas market.²³ Between 2024 and 2025, BOTAŞ supply strategy matured into a sophisticated balancing act. The company is actively optimizing its portfolio by anchoring it with dependable, long-term partners like Nigeria, while aggressively integrating flexible LNG volumes from the U.S. and increased pipeline flows from the Caspian region to enhance regional energy security.²⁴

Additionally, the Gastech 2025 summit in Milan marked a significant escalation in BOTAŞ's procurement strategy. The company inked agreements for approximately 15 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas equivalent LNG for delivery between 2025 and 2028.²⁵ These agreements, involving global giants such as Shell, BP, Eni and ExxonMobil are designed to create a multi-source, flexible, and safe energy structure. While the 20-year deal with Mercuria (4 bcm/year) and the nine-year agreement with Woodside Energy (starting 2030) highlight a pivot toward American LNG, they do not diminish the strategic value of the Nigerian baseline; rather, they provide the "peak-shaving" capacity that allows Türkiye to optimize its long-term Nigerian contracts.²⁶

Moreover, the agreement with Eni is particularly relevant to the Nigeria-Türkiye nexus. Eni, a major operator in Nigeria's upstream sector, signed a 10-year deal to supply BOTAŞ with 0.5 bcm/year starting in 2028, in addition to a shorter three-year deal starting in late 2025.²⁷ This creates a secondary, corporate-led

22 "Turkey (TUR) and Nigeria (NGA) Trade," The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), accessed January 20, 2026, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/tur/partner/nga>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

23 OEC, "Turkey and Nigeria Trade."

24 BOTAŞ Petroleum Pipeline Corporation, "Global LNG Moves by BOTAŞ," September 12, 2025, <https://www.botas.gov.tr/Icerik/global-Ing-moves-by-botas/1175>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); see also "US-Turkish LNG Deal: A Closer Look at the Numbers and Geopolitics," Caspian Post, September 14, 2025.

25 BOTAŞ 2025. <https://www.botas.gov.tr/Icerik/global-Ing-moves-by-botas/1175>.

26 "Turkey's BOTAŞ Signs 20-Year LNG Supply Deal with Mercuria," Turkish Minute, September 24, 2025.

27 Eni, "Eni Signs a Long-term LNG Sale Agreement with BOTAŞ, Strengthening its Portfolio Diversification and Expanding Global Contracted Volumes," accessed January 22, 2026, <https://www.eni.com/en-IT/media/press-release/2025/12/eni-signs-a-long-term-Ing-sale-agreement-with-botas.html>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

channel for Nigerian gas to reach Türkiye, further integrating the two markets through the portfolios of international oil companies (IOCs).

Beyond the traditional buyer-seller relationship, there is immense potential for upstream joint ventures that align with Nigeria’s “Decade of Gas” (2021–2030). Nigeria possesses Africa’s largest natural gas reserves but faces significant challenges in infrastructure maintenance and the reduction of gas flaring.²⁸ The Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO), which has gained substantial experience in deep-sea operations, is uniquely positioned to engage in Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) in Nigeria’s offshore basins.²⁹ This shift toward shared risk and investment is essential for securing long-term reserves while assisting Nigeria in its environmental and economic goals. The monetization of gas that is currently flared would not only provide a new revenue stream for the Nigerian state but also contribute to global climate goals by utilizing more efficient extraction and processing technologies.³⁰ Such cooperation would represent a “South-South” technical exchange, where Türkiye’s fleet of six deep-sea drilling and pipeline-laying vessels could be deployed to accelerate Nigeria’s offshore production.³¹

CONNECTIVITY, TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL SYNERGY

While energy remains the dominant component of bilateral trade, both governments have committed to an ambitious \$5 billion medium-term trade target.³² This target is supported by Türkiye’s broader Africa Partnership Policy, which has already driven the continent’s total trade with Türkiye to approximately \$40 billion.³³ Nigeria, as the most populous country in Africa and a strategic gateway to West and Central Africa, is considered the indispensable variable in this trajectory.³⁴

The trade data for 2024–2025 indicates a normalization of trade values. While 2023 was a peak year for Nigerian crude exports to Türkiye (nearly \$1 billion), the subsequent decrease to \$382.7 million in 2024 reflects Türkiye’s successful efforts to reduce overall energy import dependency, which fell by 5% in

28 U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), Country Analysis Brief: Nigeria (2025), https://www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/Nigeria/Nigeria-2025.pdf, (Accessed: 26 January 2026).

29 “Highlights of Türkiye’s Energy Market in 2025,” Anadolu Ajansı, January 23, 2026.

30 International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), A Balancing Act: Considerations for the Expansion of Liquefied Natural Gas Projects in Nigeria, June 2024, <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2024-06/nigeria-lng-expansion-considerations.pdf>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

31 Highlights of Türkiye’s energy market in 2025 - Anadolu Ajansı, January 23, 2026.

32 “Türkiye Targets \$5bn Trade Volume with Nigeria, Seeks Deeper Economic Ties Across Africa,” BusinessDay, January 21, 2026.

33 BusinessDay: “Türkiye Targets \$5bn Trade Volume.”

34 “Nigeria Highlights Trade Prospects at Türkiye-Africa Forum,” Punch Newspapers, January 23, 2026.

that period.³⁵ However, this drop in raw energy value has been accompanied by a significant diversification into non-oil sectors.

Product Category	2023 Value	2024 Value	Strategic Trend (2025–2026)
Crude Petroleum (HS 2709)	\$996M	\$382.7M	Normalization as domestic production rises
Petroleum Gas (LNG) (HS 2711)	\$186M	\$45.3M	Volatility based on spot-market arbitrage
Nitrogenous Fertilizers (Urea)	-	\$22.7M	Emerging: High value for food security
Raw Lead & Minerals	\$19.5M	\$9.1M	Stable: Industrial supply chain input

Source: OEC and NBS³⁶

The emergence of the nitrogenous fertilizer sector (Urea) is particularly noteworthy. As Türkiye aims to secure its agricultural supply chains and enters the world's Top 7 agricultural producers, the import of Nigerian urea has become a strategic priority for business to business (B2B) agricultural ties.³⁷ This is a clear example of how energy-derived products are being leveraged to support broader economic goals like food security and industrial competitiveness.³⁸

During the second half of 2025, Turkish imports from Nigeria experienced a staggering 881% year-on-year surge in specific months. This dramatic increase was largely driven by a low 2024 baseline and reflects BOTAŞ's strategic pivot toward maximizing long-term LNG contracts to insulate the domestic market from global price volatility.³⁹ This momentum is driven by a surge in non-oil commodities, including agricultural products and processed industrial goods. This shift is facilitated by the Nigeria-Türkiye Business Council (NTBC), which has been active in spotlighting niche investment opportunities in manufacturing, textiles, and solid minerals.⁴⁰

35 "Nigeria (NGA) and Turkey (TUR) Trade," The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), accessed January 20, 2026, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/nga/partner/tur>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

36 National Bureau of Statistics, Foreign Trade in Goods Statistics (Q2 2024) (Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), 12–15, <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241553>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); National Bureau of Statistics, Foreign Trade in Goods Statistics (Q2 2022) (Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics, 2022), 8, <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241223>. (Accessed: 26.01.2026); National Bureau of Statistics, Q2 2024 Foreign Trade Statistics Tables (Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics, 2024), Table 4, https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/pdfuploads/Q2_2024_Foreign_Trade_Statistics_Tables.pdf, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

37 "Nigeria (NGA) and Turkey (TUR) Trade," The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), accessed January 20, 2026, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/nga/partner/tur>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

38 Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), "Foreign Trade by Country and HS Code (Monthly Statistics)," November 2025, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); See also, Dangote Industries Limited, "Annual Operational Report: Expanding African and Global Fertilizer Reach" (Lagos: Dangote Group, 2025), <https://www.dangote.com/investor-relations/>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

39 Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), "Foreign Trade Statistics by Country: Imports from Nigeria (July–September 2025)," Ministry of Treasury and Finance, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); "Nigeria (NGA) and Turkey (TUR) Trade," The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), accessed January 21, 2026, <https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/nga/partner/tur>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

40 "Nigeria Highlights Trade Prospects at Türkiye-Africa Forum," Punch Newspapers, January 23, 2026.

A critical and often understated element of this trade synergy is the logistical shift toward Nigeria's southern energy corridor. Warri Port has emerged as the leading departure point for shipments to Türkiye, accounting for over 60% of the total value of these exports.⁴¹ The revitalization of the Warri and Koko Port Complex, referred to as the "Atlantic Gambit" is a national renaissance designed to decongest the Lagos ports and create a more inclusive map of national prosperity.

The Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has prioritized the dredging of the Escravos Channel and the modernization of terminal infrastructure to support 24-hour operations.⁴² For Türkiye, the efficiency of Warri Port is vital for the predictable delivery of LNG and minerals. The geographic concentration of this B2B engine in the Niger Delta allows for a direct "Southern Energy Corridor" that connects Nigerian production centers to the Turkish regasification network without the bottlenecks associated with the Lagos metropole.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSITIONS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION CARBON BORDER ADJUSTMENT MECHANISM (CBAM)

The future of Nigeria-Türkiye cooperation is also being shaped by global climate imperatives. Türkiye's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2053 has led to a renewed focus on clean energy technologies and the potential for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS).⁴³ According to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Report regarding Türkiye's transition, it was highlighted that Türkiye is among the countries most exposed to the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) due to its high share of exports in energy-intensive sectors (such as steel and aluminium). Without a domestic carbon price that aligns with EU standards, Turkish exporters will be required to purchase CBAM certificates starting in the definitive period of 2026.⁴⁴

This regulatory shift provides a powerful incentive for Nigeria and Türkiye to collaborate on "green" industrialization. By utilizing Nigerian natural gas as

41 Joshua Ebitimi, "The Atlantic Gambit: How Warri and Koko Ports Are Forging a New Trade Frontier for Nigeria," *BusinessDay*, November 15, 2025.

42 Joshua Ebitimi, "The Atlantic Gambit"

43 Mehmet İvgin and Tufan Demirel, "Advancing Sustainable Energy Security in Türkiye: Geopolitical and Policy Perspectives," *Sustainability* 17, no. 20 (October 2025): 9264, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17209264>.

44 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), *The EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism: Implications for the EBRD Regions*, EBRD Special Report (London: EBRD, 2023), <https://www.ebrd.com/publications/special-reports/cbam>; European Commission, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); "Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM): Definitive Phase and Sectoral Coverage," *Taxation and Customs Union*, accessed January 22, 2026, https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/carbon-border-adjustment-mechanism_en, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade, *Green Deal Action Plan: Impact of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism on Turkish Exports* (Ankara: Ministry of Trade, 2024), <https://www.trade.gov.tr/sustainability/green-deal>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); U.S. Department of State, "2025 Investment Climate Statements: Türkiye," accessed January 21, 2026, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2025-investment-climate-statements/turkey>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

a “bridge fuel” and implementing Turkish processing technologies that reduce methane emissions, the two nations can ensure that their industrial exports remain competitive in the European market. The “Decade of Gas” thus becomes not just an economic initiative, but a strategy for sustainable integration into the global low-carbon economy.⁴⁵ The partnership between Nigeria and Türkiye is a compelling case study in the geopolitical and economic realignment of middle powers in the 21st century. The normalization of trade volumes observed in 2024–2025 is not a sign of decline, but of a transition toward a more balanced, multi-sectoral relationship. The reliance on raw crude is being replaced by a sophisticated interaction involving long-term LNG security, high-value agricultural inputs and upstream technical cooperation.

INDUSTRIAL FOOTPRINT AND MANUFACTURING

Turkish companies are no longer just exporters of finished goods to Nigeria, they are becoming local producers. Hayat Kimya, a Turkish manufacturing giant, has invested approximately \$200 million in Ogun State (South West Nigeria) to produce chemical and hygienic products, toilet paper, and diapers.⁴⁶ Similarly, Ülker has invested \$50 million in biscuit and chocolate production under the McVitie’s brand name.⁴⁷ These investments represent a significant vote of confidence in Nigeria’s consumer market, which is projected to reach 400 million people by 2050.⁴⁸

TABLE 2. SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF TURKISH INVESTMENTS IN NIGERIA (2025)

Turkish Investors	Investment Value (USD)	Sector
Hayat Kimya	\$200M	Hygiene and Chemicals
Ülker	\$50M	Food and Confectionery
Direkçi	\$22M	Agriculture and Livestock
Various Contractors	\$2.8B (Total Completed)	Construction/Infrastructure

Source: Businessday.ng⁴⁹ People Gazette⁵⁰

45 A Balancing Act: Considerations for the expansion of liquefied natural gas projects in Nigeria - International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), accessed January 23, 2026, <https://www.iisd.org/system/files/2024-06/nigeria-lng-expansion-considerations.pdf>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

46 “Türkiye Targets \$5bn Trade Volume with Nigeria, Seeks Deeper Economic Ties Across Africa,” BusinessDay, August 31, 2024.

47 BusinessDay, “Türkiye Targets \$5bn Trade Volume.”

48 “Türkiye Announces Plans to Increase Trade Volume with Nigeria,” Peoples Gazette, October 24, 2024.

49 BusinessDay, “Türkiye Targets \$5bn Trade Volume.”

50 Peoples Gazette, “Türkiye Announces Plans.”

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA MULTIPLIER AND STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE GROWTH

The operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has fundamentally recalibrated the strategic calculus for Turkish foreign direct investment (FDI). Nigeria, serving as the preeminent logistical and commercial gateway to West Africa, offers a pivotal entry point for Turkish industrial synergy. By localizing manufacturing hubs in key industrial corridors such as Lagos, Kano, and Ogun, Turkish firms can effectively mitigate regional tariff barriers and capture a fragmented continental market of 1.4 billion consumers. This partnership is particularly critical for the structural transformation of Nigeria's manufacturing sector, by leveraging Turkish technical expertise in textiles and precision machinery, Nigeria can accelerate its transition from a net importer to a regional industrial power house, effectively moving up the global value chain.⁵¹

INFRASTRUCTURE, CONSTRUCTION AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria currently faces a formidable infrastructure deficit, estimated at \$3 trillion over the next three decades; a gap that necessitates sophisticated international expertise. Turkish construction conglomerates, renowned for their global footprint and technical proficiency, are uniquely positioned to bridge this investment chasm. The 2025 Engineering News-Record (ENR) rankings underscore this capability, featuring 45 Turkish firms among the world's Top 250 international contractors. This achievement not only reflects the sector's operational resilience but also confirms Türkiye's ascending prestige as a dominant force in global infrastructure development.⁵²

A cornerstone of the 2024–2025 bilateral agenda is the partnership between the Lagos State Government and the Turkish conglomerate Summa Group for the development of the Lekki-Epe International Airport. Following a pivotal engagement in late 2024, the formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in February 2025 marked the commencement of this landmark project. Designed to alleviate the operational strain on Murtala Muhammed International Airport, the new facility is projected to span 3,500 hectares with an initial capacity of 5 million passengers annually. Turkish firms like Summa have distin-

51 World Bank. 2022. "The African Continental Free Trade Area: Economic and Distributional Effects." Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33990>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); Haza, Numan. 2023. "Türkiye's Opening to Africa: A New Dimension in Foreign Policy." Ankara: Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs.; Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment. 2024. National Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP) Progress Report. Abuja: FMITL.

52 "45 Turkish Companies Ranked Among the World's Top 250 in the ENR 2025 List," Elevator World, August 28, 2025.

guished themselves by delivering high-specification infrastructure with a speed and cost-efficiency that often eludes Western competitors. This “middle-way” value proposition, balancing European-standard engineering with competitive pricing, has made Turkish contractors the preferred partners for Nigerian policy-makers seeking to bridge the nation’s infrastructure deficit.⁵³

Beyond aviation, Turkish Tier-1 construction firms have significantly expanded their footprint within Nigeria’s energy and transportation sectors. The cumulative value of completed Turkish construction projects in the country has reached approximately \$2.8 billion, a figure that underscores a deepening infrastructural dependency. These interventions are increasingly focused on complex civil engineering, including highways, subterranean tunnels and bridge infrastructure; alongside the integration of smart city technologies. This trajectory mirrors the strategic priorities outlined in Nigeria’s 2025 infrastructure outlook, which identifies urban modernization and multi-modal connectivity as the primary catalysts for sustained macroeconomic growth.⁵⁴

FINANCIAL REFORMS AND LOCAL CURRENCY SETTLEMENT MECHANISMS

Under the leadership of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Federal Government has executed comprehensive reforms to unify disparate exchange rate windows and transition toward a “willing buyer, willing seller” market model. These interventions yielded tangible results by August 2025, when Nigeria’s external reserves climbed to \$41 billion (the highest level in nearly four years), signalling a period of steady accretion and renewed investor confidence. Furthermore, the introduction of the Nigeria Foreign Exchange Code in January 2025 aligned the domestic financial architecture with international standards, fostering transparency and ethical conduct within wholesale foreign exchange markets.

To mitigate the systemic “dollar trap,” there is a critical imperative to operationalize local currency trade mechanisms. Türkiye has already demonstrated the efficacy of this strategy through the October 2025 bilateral currency swap agreement with the UAE (valued at TL 198 billion and 18 billion Dirhams) and the strategic extension of its swap arrangement with China. A reciprocal framework between the CBN and the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye (CBRT) would facilitate the settlement of cross-border transactions in NGN and TRY. Such a mechanism would not only reduce transaction costs but also insulate

53 “Benjamin Alade, “Lagos Picks Summa Group for Lekki-Epe International Airport Project,” *BusinessDay*, October 11, 2024.

54 “Türkiye Targets \$5bn Trade Volume with Nigeria, Seeks Deeper Economic Ties Across Africa,” *BusinessDay*, August 31, 2024; “Turkish Contractors Secure \$5B in Overseas Projects Year-to-Date: Trade Ministry,” *Türkiye Today*, July 4, 2024.

bilateral trade from external currency shocks, providing the essential financial infrastructure required for the partnership to reach its full economic potential.⁵⁵

THE HUMAN CAPITAL DIMENSION: EDUCATIONAL DIPLOMACY AND SOFT POWER

The structural and financial architecture of the Türkiye-Nigeria partnership is further fortified by a sophisticated framework of educational diplomacy. Under the aegis of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), Türkiye's international scholarship initiatives have established a strategic pipeline of Nigerian human capital, refined within Turkish academic and technical ecosystems. This deliberate investment in soft power cultivates a sustainable cohort of bilingual professionals who serve as critical intellectual intermediaries necessary to realize the \$5 billion trade target and oversee complex infrastructure projects.⁵⁶ Beyond immediate economic utility, this academic integration fosters a shared professional lexicon and enduring institutional memory between the two nations.

The depth of this partnership is quantifiable through the lens of human capital development. For the 2024–2025 academic cycle, Nigerian scholars comprise a significant portion of the 61,000 African students currently studying in Türkiye.⁵⁷ Specifically, over 3,500 Nigerians are enrolled under the YTB-managed Türkiye Scholarships program, contributing to a total Nigerian student body in the country exceeding 12,000.⁵⁸ The global prestige of this program is evidenced by its vast scale, receiving over 121,000 applications from 170 countries in 2024 alone.⁵⁹

These scholars receive world-class education in engineering, health sciences, and social sciences, returning home with technical skills and a deep cultural



This deliberate investment in soft power cultivates a sustainable cohort of bilingual professionals who serve as critical intellectual intermediaries necessary to realize the \$5 billion trade target and oversee complex infrastructure projects.

55 Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye, Inflation Report 2025-IV (Ankara: CBRT, 2025), 12–15.; Central Bank of Nigeria, “Monetary Policy Communiqué No. 152,” July 2024, <https://www.cbn.gov.ng/Out/2024/MPD/Central%20Bank%20of%20Nigeria%20Communiqu%C3%A9%20No.%20152.pdf>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); See also, “Nigeria’s External Reserves Hit \$41bn, Highest in 47 Months,” Premium Times, August 12, 2025; See also, Central Bank of Nigeria, The Nigeria Foreign Exchange Code, January 2025, <https://www.cbn.gov.ng/Out/2025/FMD/Nigeria%20FX%20Code.pdf>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026); See also, “Türkiye and UAE Extend Multi-Billion Dollar Currency Swap Agreement,” Daily Sabah, October 18, 2025.

56 “Türkiye Targets \$5bn Trade Volume with Nigeria, Seeks Deeper Economic Ties Across Africa,” BusinessDay, August 31, 2024.

57 “Turkey: African Student Numbers Grow Thanks to Scholarships,” The PIE News, September 20, 2024.

58 Yurt dışı Türkler ve Akraba Topuluklar Başkanlığı (YTB), “International Students,” accessed January 22, 2026, <https://ytb.gov.tr/en/departments/international-students>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

59 YTB, “International Students.”

affinity for Türkiye.⁶⁰ By equipping a new generation of Nigerian professionals with technical expertise and cultural fluency, this academic exchange functions as a critical soft-power multiplier required to manage and sustain the expanding \$5 billion trade and infrastructure corridor.⁶¹

On the “South-South” Cooperation and the quest for institutional reform, both Nigeria and Türkiye are seeking to maximize their strategic autonomy in an increasingly fragmented global order. Their collaboration within the Developing Eight (D-8) and the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) allows them to lead on issues ranging from digital economy standards to global governance reform. Central to the diplomatic alignment between Nigeria and Türkiye is a shared critique of the prevailing global power hierarchy, specifically the structural anachronisms of the United Nations Security Council. This mutual frustration has coalesced around the “world is bigger than five” dictum—a strategic call for the democratization of international institutions.⁶² As preeminent regional powers within the Global South, both countries argue that the current permanent membership model fails to reflect the demographic and economic realities of the 21st century, thereby necessitating a more inclusive framework for global governance.⁶³

As leading regional powers, they advocate for a more inclusive international system that reflects the realities of the 21st century. When Nigeria and Türkiye align their votes in international forums, they represent a significant portion of the global population and emerging economic output, making them a formidable force for institutional reform. Their joint stance on humanitarian crises, such as the situation in Gaza underscored by the D-8’s Joint Declaration in Istanbul in June 2024, further cements their role as moral leaders of the Global South.⁴⁹

CHALLENGES, STRATEGIC RISKS AND THE NEED FOR PROACTIVE MANAGEMENT

Despite the optimism, the partnership faces several stress tests that require proactive management by policy makers in both countries.

1. **Logistical Bottlenecks:** Direct maritime routes between Turkish ports and Nigerian hubs like Lagos or Port Harcourt remain insufficient. High freight costs and port congestion hinder the flow of goods.

60 YTB, “International Students.”

61 “Turkey: African Student Numbers Grow,” The PIE News.

62 Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, *A Fairer World Is Possible: A Proposed Model for a United Nations Reform* (Istanbul: Turkuvaz Kitap, 2021), 45–52.

63 See, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, “Address at the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly” (speech, New York, NY, September 24, 2024), United Nations Digital Library: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/>, (Accessed: 26.01.2026).

2. **Macroeconomic Instability:** The continued volatility of the currency creates uncertainty for long-term contracts. While reforms are underway, a unified currency swap mechanism is required to insulate trade from the fluctuations of the U.S.
3. **Bureaucracy and Visa Processes:** Business leaders frequently cite visa delays and bureaucratic hurdles as major barriers to entry. Streamlining these processes through digital-first policies is essential.
4. A key diplomatic factor is the Fetullah's Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), factor. While Türkiye advocates for cooperation against networks it designates as affiliated with FETÖ the issue remains sensitive within Nigeria's legal framework. Long-term strategic trust requires balancing Nigeria's sovereignty with Türkiye's security concerns through sustained high-level engagement.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Nigeria-Türkiye relationship is no longer an elective partnership; it is a structural necessity for the 21st century. As Nigeria strives to realize its potential as the engine of Africa and as Türkiye seeks to expand its footprint as a global center of industry and diplomacy, their paths have destined to converge. The presidential visit to Türkiye proved to be another defining moment an avenue through which both sides consolidated their defence, energy, and economic interests beyond the mere signing of trade deals. In a world where “The World is Bigger Than Five,” Nigeria and Türkiye are proving that the future of global politics will be written by those who dare to build common horizons.

To elevate the Nigeria-Türkiye relationship from a strategic partnership on paper to a lived reality, the following policy interventions are recommended:

1. **Institutionalize the Presidential Strategic Council:** Establish a permanent secretariat for Nigeria-Türkiye relations to ensure that the momentum of presidential visits is sustained through quarterly technical follow-ups and performance monitoring.
2. **Focus on Energy Joint Ventures:** Encourage TPAO to seek Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) in Nigeria's offshore basins. This moves the relationship from a buyer-seller dynamic to one of shared risk and reward, securing Türkiye's energy supply while aiding Nigeria's industrialization.
3. **Establish Defence Manufacturing Hubs:** Encourage Turkish defense firms (example. TAI, ASELSAN, Baykar, ROKETSAN) to move beyond hardware sales to local assembly and maintenance in Nigeria. This would allow Nigeria to become a regional maintenance hub for Turkish equipment across West Africa, boosting local employment and technical skill.

4. Operationalize the Banking and Currency Corridor: Facilitate the entry of Turkish banks (such as Ziraat or Vakıfbank) into the Nigerian market. Concurrently, fast-track negotiations for a Naira-Lira swap agreement between the CBN and CBRT to reduce the cost of trade and minimize foreign exchange risks.
5. Agricultural and Technological Transfer: Launch a “Green Revolution” pilot project where Turkish agricultural cooperatives work with Nigerian states to implement modern irrigation, seed technology and dryland farming techniques. This will assist Nigeria in achieving food security and becoming an agricultural exporter.
6. Streamline Mobility and Logistics: Implement a “Blue Economy” strategy that includes port management and the establishment of direct shipping lines between the two nations. Additionally, introduce a simplified, digital-first visa category for registered investors, students, and government officials to facilitate the movement of human capital.

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Tunç Demirtaş completed his undergraduate and master's degrees in 2012 and 2015, respectively, at the Department of International Relations, Bursa Uludağ University. He defended his master's thesis entitled "The Role of Soft Power Tools in Türkiye's Africa Policy", which was awarded the Third Best Thesis Prize in the Field of Social Sciences. Demirtaş completed his Ph. D. in 2022 at Bursa Uludağ University with a dissertation titled "Risks and Opportunities in State Re-Building: The Case of the Horn of Africa." He currently teaches various courses, including African politics, at the Department of IR, Mersin University. In addition, he serves as co-editor of the YTB Africa Yearbook, published by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB). Demirtaş has produced a wide range of academic work on African politics, including articles, book chapters, analyses, and reports, with a particular focus on the Horn of Africa as well as other regions of the continent. As part of his academic research, he has conducted fieldwork in countries such as Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa. Demirtaş is currently a Foreign Policy Researcher at the SETA, and his research interests include Horn of Africa politics, global and regional power competition in Africa, and Türkiye–Africa relations.

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Nigeria-Türkiye Partnership In A Multipolar Era: Symbiotic Necessity In A Fragmented Global Order

Tunç Demirtaş, Said Abubakar Garba

The study argues that, as unipolarity erodes and a multipolar order consolidates, the Nigeria-Türkiye relationship has shifted from conventional diplomacy to a strategic necessity between two middle powers. Nigeria-seeking security modernization, infrastructure development, and strategic autonomy-finds in Türkiye a third-way partner able to deliver technology, capacity-building, and flexible cooperation frameworks. Türkiye, advancing its Africa Partnership Policy, views Nigeria as a diplomatic and economic multiplier across ECOWAS and the African Union, while both countries share a reformist outlook on global governance captured by the doctrine “The World is Bigger Than Five.”

Grounded in Middle Power Theory and South-South Cooperation, the study uses qualitative thematic analysis of policy documents, trade statistics, and defence industry reporting. It traces the historical trajectory from early diplomatic ties to acceleration under Türkiye’s Africa Opening and the upgrade to a strategic partnership. A major turning point is identified in President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s Ankara visit on 27 January 2026, where nine memoranda were signed. These agreements are framed as a package logic that broadens cooperation beyond trade and defence into education, human mobility, standards, strategic communication, diplomacy academy coordination, and social policy-moving the relationship toward institutionalization. The report highlights JETCO as the key implementation engine that can translate summit momentum into sustained technical follow-up and raise bilateral trade toward a \$5 billion medium-term target.

Defence cooperation is presented as the most dynamic pillar in 2024-2025. Facing insurgency, banditry, and maritime insecurity, Nigeria benefits from Türkiye’s rapid procurement, training, maintenance ecosystems, and technology-transfer posture. Platforms and systems across air, land, and maritime domains are discussed as enabling a more autonomous Nigerian security architecture and reducing reliance on intermittent external interventions. Energy cooperation is framed around Türkiye’s diversification needs and Nigeria’s “Decade of Gas,” emphasizing LNG flexibility, potential upstream joint ventures, and the strategic implications of contract expirations. The report also notes manufacturing investments by Turkish firms in Nigeria, AfCFTA-linked market access, large-scale construction projects, and financial reforms - while identifying risks such as logistics bottlenecks, currency volatility, visa and bureaucracy hurdles, and sensitivities surrounding FETO-related issues. It concludes with recommendations to institutionalize high-level coordination, deepen joint ventures in energy and defence manufacturing, build local-currency settlement mechanisms, expand agricultural technology transfer, and strengthen mobility and shipping corridors.



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