

The Gülen Movement in Africa: From Turkish Transnational Asset to Anti-State Lobby

Federico Donelli

Federico Donelli is a postdoctoral research fellow of political science and international relations at the Department of Political Science of the University of Genoa and a visiting fellow at the Center for Modern Turkish Studies at the Istanbul Şehir University. He specializes in the foreign policy of Middle Eastern states, especially their engagement in the Horn of Africa.

Introduction

Since 2005, Turkey's relations with Africa have demonstrated a growing dynamism. This development was accompanied by greater diplomatic activism both bilaterally and multilaterally. Proactive Turkish diplomacy was rewarded in 2008, when, largely thanks to the votes of African countries, Turkey won a seat on the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member. This development was the outcome of a meticulous trust-building policy characterized by the simultaneous commitment of governmental and nongovernmental actors. Among the latter, Hizmet, better known as the Gülen movement—an Islamic transnational religious and social organization that has developed a multi-sectoral network in Turkey and abroad—played a pivotal role in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).¹ Between 2003 and 2014, it has held a special place in the formulation and implementation of Turkey's public diplomacy in Africa, above all in the education sector, by means of a network of several schools. For many years, Turkey has taken advantage of that network, using it to achieve many political and economic gains. However, after the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016, which, according to Ankara, was orchestrated by the movement, Africa became a further theater of internecine fighting.

Turkey's Opening Toward Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

Turkey's presence in SSA is much more recent than that of other regional players such as Israel,² Iran,³ and Saudi Arabia. Historically, Turkey has always seen the former Ottoman lands of North and Northeast Africa as its natural sphere of influence but only began to look toward SSA at the beginning of the new millennium.

Turkey's interest in the region dates back to the African Action Plan adopted in 1998. Nevertheless, due to domestic political instability, the real Turkish opening to SSA only gained momentum in 2003, when the Justice and Development Party (AKP)-led government approved a strategy called "Development of Economic Relations with African Countries." Since then, Ankara has significantly expanded its presence there by establishing trade ties and engaging in increased diplomatic activities.⁴ Literature on the topic indicates that there are various reasons for Turkey's opening to SSA: difficulties in the European Union accession process; the search for new markets for Turkish exports; the pursuit of greater operating autonomy from traditional Western allies; the desire to gain political visibility and support inside international forums; and the desire to foster sustainable economic development in the region by imparting Turkey's managerial skills and technological know-how.⁵ All of these efforts led Turkey to attain EU observer status in 2005 and to become a strategic partner of the African Union (AU) in 2008. That same year, Turkey organized the first Turkey–Africa Cooperation Summit, which was considered the beginning of a steady and sustainable cooperation process. It was a high-level official meeting between Turkey and the African countries (more than fifty AU members), distinguished by the presence of Turkish civil society representatives. The aim of the gathering was to assess the opportunities and needs of the African continent.⁶

Until 2011, Turkey had operated in Africa like other nontraditional extra-regional states (most notably China, Brazil, and India) in the fields of economic development and humanitarian aid, with little concern for political issues. Later, the role it assumed in Somalia represented a shift in Turkey's focus regarding the political aspects of the region's problems. This has made Turkey a hybrid non-traditional actor, because it combines the traditional political-stability perspective of the Western powers with the economic-trade perspective of the emerging ones.⁷ As a result, Turkey revised its Africa agenda, and in 2014 a new phase was launched under the rubric "Turkey–Africa Partnership" initiative. This new strategy would further facilitate the consolidation of African ownership of African issues under the motto "African issues require African solutions." Nowadays, Turkey is working to promote its own interests in SSA, but at the same time is engaged in finding long-term solutions for the continent's problems by employing some of the principles (non-conditionality) and the rhetoric (mutual benefit discourse) common to South–South Cooperation (SSC).

To gain the trust of Africans, Ankara relies on two elements: the absence of a colonial past (the "clean slate approach"), and the use of a south–south rhetoric. In the Turkish narrative, the absence of a colonial past is linked to historical and religious ties with the region.⁸ The Ottoman past is not denied but is reinterpreted in a positive way as a counterforce to Western imperialism.⁹ The south–south rhetoric is combined with faith-based elements, humanitarianism, and some references to a particular kind of Third-Worldism. Turkey has tried

to portray itself as an active, benevolent partner for development assistance, emphasizing the SSC approach. Like other emerging powers, Turkey refuses to use the dominant language of official development, which tends to rationalize the hierarchical relationship between North and South.¹⁰ On occasion, Turkey's rhetoric against globalization is harsh, characterizing it as a new form of Western colonialism and modern slavery. This discourse, though, is more related to the current anti-Western domestic political discourse than to any true belief or ideology.

The Rise of a Multi-Stakeholder Approach

Turkey's engagement in SSA has been multifaceted: It has built major infrastructure projects; provided humanitarian assistance; financed scholarships; offered military training; facilitated political dialogue; supported institutional capacity building; and provided budgetary aid. All these activities were concurrent with a sudden increase in Turkish public and private stakeholders in the area—religious groups, NGOs, community groups, and other forms of citizen-based entities—and by their close cooperation with their African counterparts. For instance, from the outset, Ankara's engagement in Somalia has combined political, developmental, economic, and humanitarian support, and has brought together a variety of actors including government officials, aid agencies, civil society organizations, religious organizations, municipalities, and the private sector. Consequently, there has been an increase in Turkey's civilian capacity through the involvement of non-state and transnational actors in the policy-making process, and on the ground. NGOs and faith-based transnational movements have played a key role in Africa.

This can be compared to what occurred in other regions, notably the Balkans,¹¹ where these organizations started to play a vital role in providing humanitarian and development aid.¹² These relatively new civil society entities were established in the 1990s mostly by Islamic grassroots movements and have become important in the implementation of Turkish foreign policy.¹³ What lay behind this was the fact that when Ankara began to reach out to SSA states, its foreign policy was strongly influenced by the ideas of then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmet Davutoğlu. In accordance with Davutoğlu's understanding of international relations as an inclusive post-Westphalia system, Turkey's foreign policy took on a liberal character, in both its formulation and implementation, with an emphasis on civilian capacity-building. From a theoretical perspective, this approach is linked to the multidimensional or multi-track policy, which requires the ability to operate on different levels and fronts: from "official" diplomatic relations within international and regional organizations, to transnational or "people-to-people" relations developed by non-state actors such as NGOs, charities, and business associations.¹⁴

This process was accelerated by the diversification of roles through the involvement on the ground of a greater number of private and public non-state actors, alongside the implementation of another principle of Davutoğlu's strategy: "total performance." This refers to including non-state and private transnational actors such as NGOs, business circles, think tanks, and public intellectual figures in Turkey's foreign policy agenda, thus mobilizing their support.¹⁵

In other words, during the first decade of AKP rule (2003–13), a basis was created for the "complementarity" of the motives of Turkey's private stakeholders and the process of its foreign policy implementation, especially toward long-neglected regions such as SSA.¹⁶ Specifically, ideological solidarity, common identity roots, and personal relationship networks have contributed to the consolidation of a multi-stakeholder policy.¹⁷ This complementary relationship is currently evident in all of Ankara's private initiatives overseas; alongside the organization's logo, the Turkish flag is always apparent, sometimes combined with the Ottoman coat of arms. In this way, all of these activities contribute to Turkey's recognition and visibility—in fact, its nation branding.

Humanitarianism: The Role of Turkey's Islamic NGOs

The African agenda has reflected these developments and has supported both the role of state and civil society organizations as significant actors in humanitarian diplomacy within an interagency coordinated policy.¹⁸ On the ground, this peculiar approach is a combination of government-coordinated funding, business ventures, and humanitarian work in different but connected fields. Broad coordination is provided by an institutional framework, at the top of which are the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Presidency of the Republic. Despite the fact that there is no concept paper or strategy document that informs Ankara's policy implementation on the ground, a central role is certainly played by the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), with the assistance of Turkish embassies and consulates. TIKA represents an operative branch of the Turkish government, the aim of which is to pave the way for public and private initiatives in three main areas: humanitarian aid, assistance in the development of the country, and financial investments to consolidate business.¹⁹ In the field, TIKA is the point of reference for all initiatives, both public and private. These include the humanitarian and developmental assistance programs that have been launched in SSA countries, and commercial activities that have begun alongside high-level bilateral visits.

Turkey's commitments are concentrated primarily in four areas: health, education, infrastructure, and the establishment of institutional buildings. For this reason, various ministries and institutions such as the Ministry of Food, Agriculture,

and Livestock; the Ministry of National Education; and the Technological Research Council of Turkey have operated on the ground as well. In terms of development, state agencies such as the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK) and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM) are cooperating with several private organizations.

Following the multi-track approach, אמלשרש has formed a new mechanism of mutual interaction between civil organizations and state institutions whereby both work to reach common international objectives. The state cooperates with nongovernmental organizations in order to develop a dual feedback and knowledge transfer structure from the ground up. Specifically, nongovernmental diplomacy has become an essential part of Turkish policy. A special role in this field was pioneered by several grassroots Islamic organizations such as Deniz Feneri, Cansuyu, Yeryüzü Doktorları, and the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (İHH).²⁰ The latter, established in 1992, is Turkey's top nongovernmental humanitarian organization by aid volume. The İHH has delivered assistance in the fight against hunger and has opened medical clinics in 140 countries worldwide. It has helped restore Turkey's bonds with the global Muslim community [*ummah*] through humanitarian work. It also became famous for the so-called "*Mavi Marmara incident*" in 2010.²¹ Despite the controversy surrounding the flotilla, the İHH campaign was successful and contributed to the organization's status as a trustworthy third party in the Muslim world willing to share in the burden of moral struggles. At the same time, it strengthened its bond with the Turkish government, which had supported the effort.²² This event not only affected Turkey–Israel relations (as it set the two former allies at odds), but also influenced Turkish foreign policy in a wider sense, helping Turkey take the position of a third pole or axis in the Middle East. Moreover, since then, in line with the Turkish multi-track approach, the İHH has broadened its field of activity and now acts as a mediator in international disputes and intra-state conflicts.

Generally, the Islamic NGOs are involved in the field of humanitarian diplomacy and are boosting the quality and quantity of Turkish humanitarian assistance.²³ They have received encouragement and moral support from governmental figures who take part in their activities. Thanks to the growing role of Islamic NGOs in the implementation of Ankara's agenda in SSA, a widespread sensitivity to African problems has developed among the Turkish people. This is evident in the broad public support demonstrated for several fundraising efforts and the collection of relief goods for African countries promoted by citizens-based organizations, which, in some cases, have preceded the official political initiatives. Though they do not discriminate on the basis of religion or ethnic origin in their aid activities, a strong Islamic identity shapes their approach to this work.

The Gülen Movement's Public Diplomacy in Africa

Within the framework of the multi-track approach, a key role has been played by the Gülen movement. Thanks to its considerable presence in the state apparatus and to the knowledge it gleaned on the African continent, it quickly became Turkey's most active and representative non-state actor, especially in the field of public diplomacy.

The Gülen movement began to operate in Africa in the mid-1990s, during the brief rule of the Welfare Party (RP) led by Necmettin Erbakan. Later, after its initial period of low-profile activity, the movement rapidly expanded its network in Africa, thanks to the proactive policy promoted by the AKP. Following the same policy it had adopted in other regions (the Balkans, Europe, Central Asia), the movement founded "dialogue" or interfaith centers in key African cities.²⁴ These organizations openly propagated the teachings of Fethullah Gülen. They have been active in interfaith dialogue and have especially close relations with the Catholic and Anglican Churches.

The name Gülen never appears on the centers, and this sort of "camouflage" is one of the peculiar features of the movement and its affiliated organizations, and has been since its establishment in the 1970s. This ambiguous identification derives from the informality of the movement and its culture of secrecy, which has taken on different forms over time. Since its first engagement in Africa in 1994, the movement has been known to operate in fifty-four African countries, becoming the backbone of Turkish public diplomacy on the continent. Indeed, Turkey's activity in Africa, most notably in SSA, has largely depended on Gülenist organizations working in four main fields: humanitarian aid, business, media, and education. Gülenist engagement in Africa was driven, at least initially, by genuine concern, but after 2016, it became clear that its activities were a front for the advancement of the movement's long-term strategic interests in the region and to expand its own network.

Gülenist followers [*fetullahçı*] settled in many African countries. They were mostly businessmen belonging to the Gülenist umbrella association, the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON),²⁵ lobbyists from the interreligious dialogue platforms, and expatriate administrators and teachers in Gülen schools, which became the centers of gravity for these followers in SSA.²⁶ Cultural policy was the field in which the movement had decided to invest most, a choice in line with the long-term strategy it pursued within Turkey. It aimed to rise within the institutions through the formation of the future ruling elites. Gülenist cultural activities in Africa officially began in 1994 with the opening of the first Gülen-inspired schools in Tangier. Later, in 1997, Hizmet opened the first one in SSA in Senegal, followed by schools a year later in Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria.²⁷ Since then, the movement has been at the

forefront of educational projects, with nearly 110 Gülen-inspired primary, middle, and secondary schools operating in Africa, in addition to a university in Abuja. Initially, the projects leveraged religious affinity—schools were opened in African countries that are predominantly Muslim or have a Muslim minority of at least 10 percent. Gülenist followers seemed to be the modern-day version of Protestant missionaries who heeded a call to spread the movement’s power and influence simultaneously. The only exceptions are South Africa and Angola, which still have Gülenist schools despite having very small Muslim minorities. However, from the outset, the schools established by the Gülenists were not presented as belonging to a transnational Islamic network, but rather as local organizations with no global ties. As such, until 2013, they were often not identified by African students, their parents, or the African authorities as belonging to such a network.²⁸

In a short time, Gülen-inspired schools became very popular among the African upper middle class. What made these institutions so attractive were both their curricula and their high standard of education—often higher than that of local schools—and their adherence to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda. The aim of the movement was to promote an education that combined the intellectual and moral aspects [*zihinvel ve ablaki*] of learning, and to provide a system of values, knowledge, and religion to Muslim and non-Muslim students. The schools do not offer Muslim education or religion classes, but rather follow the national curriculum and supplement it with Fethullah Gülen’s theological and ethical teachings.²⁹ The main language of instruction is the principal official language of the African country in which the school is located, such as English, French, Portuguese, or Arabic. Turkish is also offered as one of the foreign language course options. In so doing, the schools widened their catchment area and became a real alternative to both Western secular schools (mainly French ones) and traditional religious schools.³⁰

A distinguishing feature of these schools is that they are geared to the upper middle classes of the local population. In attempting to cater to that cohort, they used to allocate scholarships to the children of senior African bureaucrats, gaining leverage with local officials. Gülenist schools were soon seen by African leaders as the perfect environment in which to shape future elites and a very appealing choice for both their sons and daughters. This elitist approach has contributed to the reinforcement of existing social inequalities in several African countries. The aim of the Gülen movement was to create a network among the future African ruling class in order to expand its base and to nurture its economic interests. The schools became a place in which contacts with the local ruling class could be established and consolidated, preparing the ground for businessmen close to the movement. The intention was to create a network useful to both the movement and its members. Therefore, the Gülenists established a symbiotic relationship between the entrepreneurs and the parents of the children who attended the schools. Most of the parents occupy important positions in the state bureaucracy.

In addition to indoctrination and network expansion, schools were—and some still are—used by the movement to recruit new members in order to infiltrate the public service. This policy allowed the movement to gain influence within the institutions of many African countries following the Turkish “deep state” model.

The second field in which the movement emerged as a particularly active transnational actor was the humanitarian one. The Gülen movement had its own global welfare arm known as Kimse Yok Mu Solidarity and Aid Association, later called Kimse Yok Mu (KYM). This was a charitable, nonprofit organization established in 2002 by volunteers who were inspired by the ideas of Fethullah Gülen. Gradually, the charity acquired a central role in aid efforts and tried to invest in permanent projects in Turkey and abroad. Due to the acute needs of many Africans, the charity, like other Turkish NGOs, began to engage in multiple activities. KYM’s popularity reached its peak during the months of the terrible famine that struck Somalia in 2011. In 2013, KYM distributed about \$17.5 million of assistance to forty-three countries in Africa. In addition to its work in Somalia, the charity launched very extensive programs in Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya, where it built several complexes including a hospital, soup kitchen, dormitory, and an orphanage. Especially in Sudan, KYM focused on people in need of cataract surgery. Like the initiatives in the educational field, the humanitarian commitment also helped the movement gain the trust and sympathy of African officials and the public.

The third field in which the movement succeeded in making its mark felt in SSA was the economic one, and its operative arm in the business realm was TUSKON. A nongovernmental and nonprofit umbrella organization with headquarters in Istanbul, TUSKON represents the Turkish business sector.³¹ It is the most important Turkish organization engaged in trade and investment promotion in Africa, and organizes numerous trade ties and business exchanges between companies in Turkey and several African countries. To further consolidate its presence on the ground in Africa and to increase membership, the movement promoted the opening of several business organizations that follow Gülenist principles. Their primary task was to organize African business delegations to Turkey and to host visiting Turkish business delegations.

Finally, in order to reach and indoctrinate an increasing number of people, the movement invested a lot in the media and was especially effective in doing so. The Gülen-affiliated media empire based in Turkey and the United States (New Jersey) reached out to Africa. It had a variety of print and TV outlets based in Turkey and outside the country that promoted its message. Furthermore, the dialogue centers in Africa distributed print media and were trying to expand the movement’s television operation across the continent. In 2012, the movement opened Ebru Africa TV, broadcasting in English from Kenya. Later, in 2014, it launched the internet-based Arabic-language Hira TV. Newspapers played an important role as well. Before they were shut down by the government after the

failed coup attempt, the movement's historical organs—the Turkish-language *Zaman* and English-language *Zaman Today*—were the only Turkish newspapers read in Africa. Several other publications, such as the English-language magazine *The Fountain*, the Arabic-language *Hira*, and the French-language *Ebru Magazine* targeting French-speaking African countries, were also distributed.

From a broader perspective, Ankara also enjoyed the benefits of the movement's engagement in several African countries, taking advantage of the links established by the Gülenists to strengthen the Turkish presence. From the start, the efforts to spread Turkish cultural values and educational standards were closely linked to Gülen, his worldview, and his operations. Over time, Gülenist organizations and schools have become the main conduit for Turkish soft power, enabling Ankara to establish and maintain relations with African states. However, rather than a coordinated or planned strategy, it was a convergence of interests that resulted in a win-win relationship. Gülenist schools were seeking legitimacy through the support of Turkish officials, while Ankara was using the schools as cultural ambassadors. To some extent, Turkey outsourced a significant part of its public diplomacy in Africa to the Gülen movement as well as part of its humanitarian diplomacy to Islamic NGOs.

The Implications of the July 15 Failed Coup Attempt

As demonstrated, between 2005 and 2014, the Gülenist movement had a special place in the formulation and practical implementation of Turkey's opening to Africa. However, the rift between Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government and the Gülen movement triggered conflict within Turkish institutions, with repercussions beyond its borders. Since 2014, the Turkish government has been implementing a policy of pressuring and, if possible, closing down the movement's organizations within the country and abroad. At the same time, Turkey has modified its multi-stakeholder approach by setting up its own para-public structures that were able to integrate with other private actors. Pressure on the Gülen movement's network and activities increased when the Turkish government listed it as a terrorist group, calling it the Fetullah Gülen Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), just weeks before the failed coup attempt conducted by the movement's affiliates. As a consequence of the July 15 coup, Ankara had to engage in the conflict even further abroad, counteracting Gülenist propaganda and its recruitment machinery. For this purpose, Turkey has been exerting pressure on African leaders to shut down all activities related to the movement, especially the revenue-generating organizations. Concurrently, the Turks must promptly redefine their African policy on the ground, developing new tools for its own transnationalization.³²

The main target of Ankara's neutralization efforts is the network of Gülenist educational institutions—preparatory schools for university examinations,

universities, high schools, and dormitories—both in Turkey and abroad. Undoubtedly, the global Gülenist school system was and still is an important source of revenue and new followers for the movement, and, above all, a wellspring for the indoctrination of future generations. The latter is one of the main reasons Turkey's government perceives it as a genuine threat to its own security. To counter the spread of schools abroad, and to replace them where possible, Turkey set up the Maarif Foundation, a hybrid public-private structure of international scope tied to the Ministry of Education. It is a predominantly governmental structure, but as a foundation, it receives private funds, public subsidies, and is tax exempt. However, taking control of Gülenist schools abroad is complicated, because before it can do so, the Maarif foundation has to wait until the local authority bans the movement. In some cases, Turkey's requests to shut down Gülenist schools led to tensions with African governments and threatened existing ties. For example, South Africa has allegedly been pressured to close its Gülenist schools. However, South African President Jacob Zuma has pledged his continued support to the Star College group, which runs the movement's schools that cater to approximately 3,000 South African students. The schools have been in the country for fifteen years. Because of its level of development in comparison to some of its neighbors, South Africa is less impressed by Turkish promises of investment than it is by the benefits of advanced education.

Other factors make the Maarif Foundation's task even more complicated. Over the years, Gülenist schools have built up a high standard of education and a good reputation that will be difficult to match in the short term. Another issue of concern is the schools' personnel. Gülenist teachers and administrative staff were driven by an almost missionary zeal. They were committed to proselytizing and strengthening the power of their movement. The Maarif foundation aims to replace the staff of the Gülenist institutions with civil servants who can apply to be relocated abroad, and graduate students who, having failed the national exam for teacher training, can be hired on short-term contracts for these posts. Though the new Turkish teachers might be motivated and professional, it is doubtful that they will have the same deep sense of commitment as the Gülenists. For these reasons, countering the anti-state propaganda promoted by the Gülenists will take considerable time and resources.

In the economic field, pressure by the state on TUSKON forced it to cut back dramatically on its efforts to promote business relations in SSA and elsewhere. In fact, the organization's trade and business promotion efforts in Africa have effectively been shut down. However, Gülen-supporting businesspeople also operate in several independent and informal associations in various African countries. Examples include the South African Turkish Business Association, the Association of Businessmen and Investors of Nigeria and Turkey, and the Ethio-Turkish Entrepreneur Association. These organizations continue to exist in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt. In some cases, their activities have been curtailed and

their web sites are no longer functioning. However, some are actually recruiting new members as Gülen supporters in Turkey are fleeing, and some are relocating to Africa. Turkish firms have not always replaced businesses now-defunct businesses belonging to the movement's affiliated entrepreneurs. This has created a vacuum filled by other regional and extra-regional countries.

More important, the fight against the Gülenist network has affected Ankara's access to African markets that are particularly relevant for Turkey's exports and access to natural resources. In order to contain the damage, Turkey has begun to support an increased presence of the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSIAD),³³ a group of Anatolian entrepreneurs, traditionally very close to the AKP government. MÜSIAD branches have been set up in several African countries to replace TUSKON's presence and they are currently backed by the Turkish Foreign Ministry. Ankara's efforts also extended to the financial sector. In 2009 the Gülenist Bank Asya purchased a stake in an Islamic banking group in West Africa. In 2015, after the government effectively took control of Bank Asya, it was forced to sell the Dakar-based Tamweel Africa Holding, which promotes Islamic finance in SSA, to the Saudi-based Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector.³⁴

Despite Ankara's best efforts, Gülenist propaganda and networks continue to promote a counter-narrative and attempt to discredit Turkey's image on the continent. Indeed, even though nearly all Gülen-affiliated media activity inside Turkey has been shut down or taken over by the state, its media efforts outside Turkey are not flourishing, but they are surviving. These emphasize Gülenist philosophy and take a harsh line against the Turkish state and the AKP government. The presence of the movement's affiliates and followers is creating a kind of Gülenist diaspora in Africa that operates as a lobby against the Turkish government. Furthermore, the ties established by the *fethullahçı* with the African ruling elites have also created resistance to Ankara's counteroffensive. The African countries with weaker official relations with Turkey have been more reluctant to give up the assistance and aid they have received from the movement. Over the medium term, pressure from Ankara might dampen relations and in the worst-case scenario, lead to their rupture.

Conclusion

The Gülen movement's lobbying efforts in Africa have the potential to damage or even reverse Turkey's gains on that continent. Indeed, the consequences of the domestic political warfare between Ankara and the movement may partly affect Turkey's humanitarian efforts and public diplomacy, compromising its reputation in the region. Therefore, after the failed coup in 2016, the need to tackle the Gülen movement, which has well-established cells and networks in the region, was among

the reasons that led Turkey to increase its involvement in SSA. However, wiping out Gülenist influence in Africa may prove very difficult, since it now has deep roots on that continent dating back decades, in part due to Ankara's decision to outsource its public diplomacy to the movement. In the immediate future, Turkey should move cautiously in its relations with African states and refrain from exerting excessive pressure or it could jeopardize the attainments of the last fifteen years. If this occurs, Ankara may face setbacks in its access to the natural resources that make up the largest share of Turkey's imports from Africa.

Notes

- ¹ There is a considerable body of literature on the Gülen movement. See, for example, Hakan M. Yavuz and John L. Esposito, *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement* (Syracuse, 2003); Helen R. Ebaugh, *The Gülen Movement: A Sociological Analysis of a Civic Movement Rooted in Moderate Islam* (New York, 2010); Hakan M. Yavuz, *Toward an Islamic Enlightenment: The Gülen Movement* (Oxford, 2013); Joshua D. Hendrick, *Gülen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World* (New York, 2013).
- ² See Arye Oded, *Africa and Israel: A Unique Case in Israeli Foreign Relations* (London, 2018).
- ³ See Eric Lob, "The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Policy and Construction Jihad's Developmental Activities in Sub-Saharan Africa," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, XLVIII:2 (2016).
- ⁴ The number of Turkish embassies in Africa has risen from 12 in 2009 to 40 in 2018.
- ⁵ For a study of the different factors that led to the involvement of Turkey, see Kenan Tepedelen, "The Turkish Policy of Opening up to Africa," *Foreign Policy*, XXXIV (2008); Tom Wheeler, "Ankara to Africa: Turkey's outreach since 2005," *South African Journal of International Affairs*, XVIII:1 (2011); Mehmet Özkan, and Serhat Orakçı, "Viewpoint: Turkey as a 'political' actor in Africa—an assessment of Turkish involvement in Somalia," *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, IX:2 (2015).
- ⁶ The event ended with the signing of the Istanbul Declaration on Turkey–Africa Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future. The second Turkey–Africa cooperation summit was held in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) in November 2014. See Ali Bilgic and Daniela Nascimento, "Turkey's new focus on Africa: Causes and Challenges," *Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre Policy Brief* (September 2014), <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/183490/04208a7feefed486e3be192c27f0f40.pdf>.
- ⁷ Federico Donelli, "A hybrid actor in the Horn of Africa: an analysis of Turkey's involvement in Somalia," *The Horn of Africa since the 1960s: Local and International Politics Intertwined*, Aleksis Ylönen and Jan Záhorský (eds.) (New York, 2017).
- ⁸ Ahmet Davutoğlu emphasizes these historical ties: "You are home. Turkey is your motherland. In the sixteenth century Ahmed Gurey fought occupying forces with Ottoman support." Opening remarks by Foreign Minister of Turkey Ahmet Davutoğlu, Somali Civil Society Gathering, Istanbul, May 27, 2012. For the historical ties evoked by Turkish narrative, see Kateřina Rudincová, "New player on the scene: Turkish engagement in Africa," *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, XXV,

- (2014); for the religious dimension, see Mehmet Özkan, “Turkey’s Religious and Socio-Political Depth in Africa ‘Emerging Powers in Africa,’” LSE IDEAS Special Report, XVI (2013); Siradag Abdurrahim, “Benevolence or Selfishness: Understanding the Increasing Role of Turkish NGOs and Civil Society in Africa,” *Insight on Africa*, VII:1 (2015).
- ⁹ Mark Langan, “Virtuous power Turkey in sub-Saharan Africa: the ‘Neo-Ottoman’ challenge to the European Union,” *Third World Quarterly*, XXXVIII: 6 (2017).
- ¹⁰ Federico Donelli, “The Ankara Consensus: the significance of Turkey’s engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Global Change, Peace e3 Security*, XXXI: 2 (2018).
- ¹¹ Anne R. Solberg, “The role of Turkish Islamic Networks in the Western Balkans,” *Southeast Europe Journal of Politics and Society*, LV:4 (2007).
- ¹² Nihat Çelik, and İşeri, Emre, “Islamically oriented humanitarian NGOs in Turkey: AKP foreign policy parallelism,” *Turkish Studies*, XVII:3 (2016).
- ¹³ Zeynep Atalay, “Civil Society as Soft Power: Islamic NGOs and Turkish Foreign Policy,” *Turkey between Nationalism and Globalization*, Riva Kastoryano (ed.) (New York, 2013).
- ¹⁴ For an analysis of Davutoğlu’s approach, see Behlül Özkan, “Turkey, Davutoğlu and the Idea of Pan-Islamism,” *Survival*, LVI:4 (2014); for Davutoğlu’s thoughts on the relevance of the multidimensional approach, see his *Stratejik Derinlik. Türkiye’nin Uluslararası Konumu* (İstanbul, 2001); Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring,” *Turkey Policy Brief Series*, (2012), <http://sam.gov.tr/principles-of-turkish-foreign-policy-and-regional-political-structuring/>.
- ¹⁵ Davutoğlu (2001), op. cit., p. 83.
- ¹⁶ Çelik, and İşeri, op. cit. See also Brendon Cannon, “Deconstructing Turkey’s Efforts in Somalia,” *Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies*, XVI:14 (2016).
- ¹⁷ Hakan Mehmetcik, “Turkey and India in the Context of Foreign Aid to Africa,” *Middle Powers in Global Governance: The Rise of Turkey*, Emel Parlar Dal (ed.) (London, 2018), p. 270.
- ¹⁸ Davutoğlu argued that “there have been contributions from several of Turkey’s public institutions and NGOs, ranging from Turkish Airlines to TİKA, Kızılay, TOKI, and Emergency Disaster Management Presidency (AFAD).” See Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Turkey’s humanitarian diplomacy: objectives, challenges and prospects,” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, XLI: 6 (2013), p. 867.
- ¹⁹ Özkan and Orakçı, op. cit.
- ²⁰ *İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri İnsani Yardım Vakfı Kişisel Verilerin Korunması*.
- ²¹ For more on that episode, see Andrzej Makowski, “The Mavi Marmara Incident and the Modern Law of Armed Conflict at Sea,” *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, VII:2 (2013).
- ²² Hüsrev Tabak, “Broadening the nongovernmental humanitarian mission: the IHH and mediation,” *Insight Turkey*, XVII:3 (2015), 202.
- ²³ Federico Donelli, “Features, Aims and Limits of Turkey’s Humanitarian Diplomacy,” *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, XI:3 (2017).

- ²⁴ For instance, Turquoise Harmony Institute was established in South Africa, Kilimanjaro Dialogue Center in Tanzania, Respect Foundation in Kenya, and Ufuk Dialogue Foundation in Nigeria.
- ²⁵ Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey).
- ²⁶ Gabrielle Angey, "The Gülen Movement and the Transfer of a Political Conflict from Turkey to Senegal," *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, XIX:1 (2018), p. 53.
- ²⁷ David Shinn, *Hizmet in Africa: The Activities and Significance of the Gülen Movement* (Los Angeles, 2015).
- ²⁸ Angey, op. cit., p. 54.
- ²⁹ Bayram Balci, *Missionnaires de l'Islam en Asie centrale, Les écoles turques de Fetbullab Gülen* (Istanbul, 2003).
- ³⁰ Gabrielle Angey, "Challenging the Soft Power Analysis: A Case Study of African Students in the Gülen movement's Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, XXI (March 2015).
- ³¹ Hendrick, op. cit., p. 167.
- ³² Angey, "The Gülen Movement," pp. 66–67.
- ³³ Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association).
- ³⁴ "Saudi Bank Buys \$37.7million Senegalese Asset from Turkey's Bank Asya," *Gulf Africa Review*, January, 19, 2015.