

# A chat with Turkish ambassador

## "Turkey is a bridge between Europe and Asia in every sense."

**S**outh Sudan, just like other sovereign countries, has established diplomatic ties with a number of world's powerful nations, including the United States, Britain, China, just to mention a few. Most, if not all of them, are helping the government in the nation building.

*This week, we speak with Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey in Juba, Haluk Ağca. In the interview conducted by The Eye's Koang Pal Chang, Mr Ağca describes the role his country is playing.....*

**Q. What is the relationship between Turkey and South Sudan like?**

A. First of all, I would like to thank you for this interview. Turkey is among the countries that recognized the Republic of South Sudan shortly after its declaration of independence. Turkey desires to establish a strong and lasting friendship between the two nations with brotherly solidarity in international arena. The economic, social and political development of the Republic of South Sudan will help region's stability and peace.

**Q. How is Turkey helping South Sudan in terms of development?**

A. We have been providing humanitarian technical development assistances since the independence of the Republic of South Sudan and Turkey wishes to continue with this assistances in the future. During Oslo Conference held in Norway on 14-16 May 2014, the Government of Turkey donated \$500,000 as contribution to UN's humanitarian assistance program to South Sudan. Turkish government has been offering a number of training programs to South Sudanese government officials in different fields. Among them are diplomacy, health, electricity, custom and media.

A training program was organized for the twenty (20) South Sudanese diplomats between 12 and 17 January 2014 in Ankara by the Diplomacy Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

A training program was organized for thirty (30) South Sudanese Custom Managers and Officers between 10 and 14 February 2014 in Ankara by the Ministry of Customs and Trade of Turkey.

Two ambulances were donated to Juba Teaching Hospital on 10 April 2014 by the Government of Turkey.

A training program was organized for seven (7) officials of the Ministry of Electricity, Dams and Water Resources of South Sudan between 29 June and 6 July 2014 in Ankara by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs of Turkey.

A training program for ten (10) Ambassadors of the Ministry Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of South Sudan between 22 and 26 June 2014 in Ankara by the Diplomacy Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Eighteen (18) items of medical equipment and devices were donated to the Ministry of Health between 4 and 8 August 2014.

A training program for five (5) personnel of Civil Aviation Authority of South Sudan between 15 and 17 December 2014 in Ankara by the General Directorate of Meteorology of Turkey.

A training program was organized for nineteen (19) personnel of Civil Aviation Authority between 4 January and 8 February 2015 in Ankara by the General Directorate of State Airports Authority of Turkey.

A training program for sixteen (16) members of staff of South Sudan Radio and Television by Turkish Radio and Television Corporation between 25 May and 5 June 2015.

Over two tons of medicines and medical equipment donated to the Ministry of Health on 12 June 2015.

Juba International Airport was provided with a VOR/DME (VHF Omni-range Radio/ Distance Measuring Equipment) navigation station along with solar panels and a power generator on July 2015.

A training program for eight (8) personnel of Ministry of Health between 6 September and 3 October 2015 at the Edik Zübejde Hanım Women's Teaching Hospital in Ankara.

A training program for eleven (11) personnel of Ministry of Health between 1 and 28 November 2015 at Keçiören Teaching Hospital and Atatürk Teaching Hospital in Ankara.

A training program for ten (10) South Sudanese diplomats on 1-8 November 2015 in Ankara by the Diplomacy Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

In the meantime, we are ready and open to all proposals from the officials of the Republic of South Sudan to start new programs or projects.

On "Türkiye Scholarship", a government funded program for international students, we grant scholarships to South Sudanese students for university education in Turkey, undergraduate or graduate. Last year, 32 South Sudanese students were awarded scholarships. This year probably 20 to 30 students will get scholarships.

**Q. How does this process work?**

A. Any South Sudanese student can apply; it's very easy. You just log on internet and make your application electronically, and then they will invite you for interview. Of course, first of all you have to fill out enough forms and then they will review all these information you provide and if everything is alright, then they send you an email, asking you to come to Turkish embassy for interview. This is repeated every year, either in April or May. There are roughly 20 to 30 students that will be granted scholarship this year. One person will be granted scholarship with Doctorate degree, two or three will be granted Master's degrees, and the rest will be undergraduate students. They are free to choose whatever they want to study, because Turkish government covers all the expenses, including air tickets, food, accommodation, health insurance, educational materials and pocket money. It doesn't cost them anything. When they finish their education, the government provides air ticket to go back home. If you wish to apply for Turkish scholarship program, simply go online and lock on [www.turkiye.gov.tr](http://www.turkiye.gov.tr)

**Q. What can you tell us about Turkey?**

A. First of all, I would like to thank you for this interview; Turkey is partly European, partly Asian country, and at the same time Turkey is a developed country with diversified economy and huge dynamism. Turkey is ready to cooperate with the Republic of South Sudan in all fields of economy and we would like to share our knowledge, experiences in the field of industry, agriculture, tourism and in all other areas, not only in economic area. We always live as independent nation throughout history, and since 1923, we are a republic, but before that, we used to be Ottoman Empire. Before Ottoman Empire, we used to be Setuk Empire, Gokturk Empire, Golden Horde Empire

extra and etcetera. Our official language is Turkish; Turkish is not related to European languages or Middle East language. In many ways it's unique, its structure is different. Turkish is in the same group of some Asian and European languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Mongolian, Hungarian, Estonian and Finnish. Turkish is a bridge between Europe and Asia, not only geographically but at the same time culturally, economic and in every sense, we are a bridge and this is unique position to develop our relation with European - Asian economies and African countries.

Turkey is among the countries developing steadily and fast with a highly diversified economy. Turkey is a bridge between Europe and Asia in every sense. Turkey's largely free-market economy is increasingly driven by its industry and service sectors. An aggressive privatization program has reduced state involvement in basic industry, banking, transport, and communication, and an emerging cadre of middle-class entrepreneurs is adding dynamism to the economy and expanding production beyond the traditional textiles and clothing sectors. The automotive, petrochemical, and electronic industries are rising in importance and have surpassed textiles within Turkey's export mix. Turkey attracted foreign direct investments of about \$170 billion. Foreign investment procedures will be simplified further.

Turkish brands like Beko and Vestel are among the largest producers of consumer electronics and home appliances in Europe, and invest a substantial amount of funds for research and development in new technologies related to these fields. Other key sectors of the Turkish economy are banking, construction, home appliances, electronics, textiles, oil refining, petrochemical products, food, mining, iron and steel, and machine industry.

The manufacturing industry is one of the main drivers of the Turkish economy. Turkey is among the world's developed countries and more developed than most of EU countries with a tremendous development potential. The country is among the world's leading producers of agricultural products; textiles; motor vehicles, ships and other transportation equipment; construction materials; consumer electronics and home appliances. Turkey is a global steel and cement producer. The Turkish construction and contracting industry is one of the leading, most competitive and dynamic construction/contracting industries in the world. Many Turkish construction/contracting companies were selected for the Top International Contractors List prepared by the Engineering News-Record, which made the Turkish construction/contracting industry the world's second largest, ranking behind those of China.

Tourism is one of the most dynamic and fastest developing sectors in Turkey. According to travel agencies TUI AG and Thomas Cook, 11 of the 100 best hotels of the world are located in Turkey. Tourism in Turkey is focused largely on a variety of historical sites, and on seaside resorts along its Aegean and Mediterranean Sea coasts. In recent years, Turkey has also become a popular destination for culture, spa, and health care tourism. In 2015, Turkey attracted more than forty million foreign tourists, ranking as the 6th most popular tourist destination in the World.

Istanbul and Antalya are the most important tourism spots, not only in Turkey, but also in the world. There are thousands of hotels (with more than one million beds) and other tourist-oriented industries in the city, catering to both vacationers and visiting professionals. Turkey's largest city, Istanbul, has a number of major attractions derived from its historical status as capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. The construction of the world's largest airport in Istanbul will be completed within three years.

Turkish Airlines which is the national flag carrier airline of Turkey operates scheduled services to 290 destinations in Eu-

rope, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Turkish Airlines won the Skytrax awards for Europe's Best Airline, Southern Europe's Best Airline, and the World's Best Premium Economy Class Airline Seat for five consecutive years.

Turkey is the tenth ranked producer of minerals in the world in terms of diversity. Around 60 different minerals are currently produced in Turkey. The richest mineral deposits in the country are boron salts, Turkey's reserves amount to 72% of the world's total.

Turkey ranks the fifth most visited country by medical tourists and has also become one of the most popular medical tourism destinations with more than half a million medical tourists visiting the country last year, according to data compiled by the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB), the Health Ministry and private hospital figures. Turkey aims to be number one by 2023. Turkish hospitality and friendliness now combined with easily accessible high quality medical treatment at reasonable costs, Turkey is a rising star on the global medical tourism scene. Medical tourists can benefit from the wide variety of healthcare options with high standings in international accreditations with 48 medical institutions that have been accredited by Joint-Commission International (JCI), one of the highest in the world.

Turkey has many modern armament manufacturers. Annual exports reached \$1.6 billion in 2014 and aims to achieve an export of defense industry products over \$2 billion in 2016. Turkey has recently launched domestically built new military/intelligence satellites including a 0.8m resolution reconnaissance satellite (Project Gökürk-1) for use by the Turkish Armed Forces and a 2m resolution reconnaissance satellite (Project Gökürk-2) for use by the Turkish National Intelligence Organization.

Other important products include the Altay main battle tank, A400M, TAI TFX, TF-2000 class AAW frigate, Milgem class corvette, TAI Anka UAV, Aselsan İzci UGV, T-155 Firtına self-propelled howitzer, J-600T missile, T-129 attack helicopter, Roketsan UMITAS anti-tank missile, Roketsan Cirit laser-guided rocket, Panter Howitzer, ACV-300, Otokar Cobra and Akrep, BMC - Kirpi, FNSS Pars 6x6 and 8x8 APC, Nurol Ejder 6x6 APC, TOROS artillery rocket system, Bayraktar Mini UAV, ASELPD, and SOM cruise missile.

Turkey is an oil and natural gas producer, but the level of production by the state-owned TPAO isn't large enough to make the country self-sufficient, which makes Turkey a net importer of both oil and gas. However, the recent discovery of new oil and natural gas fields in the country, particularly off the Black Sea coast of northern Turkey; as well as in Eastern Thrace, the Gulf of Iskenderun and in the provinces of the Southeastern Anatolia Region near the borders with Syria and Iraq; will help Turkey to reach a higher degree of self-sufficiency in energy production.

The pipeline network in Turkey included 1,738 kilometers (1,080 mi) for crude oil, 2,321 kilometers (1,442 mi) for petroleum products, and 708 kilometers (440 mi) for natural gas in 1999. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, the second longest oil pipeline in the world, was inaugurated on May 10, 2005. The pipeline delivers crude oil from the Caspian Sea basin to the port of Ceyhan on Turkey's Mediterranean coast, from where it is distributed with oil tankers to the world's markets. The planned Nabucco Pipeline will also pass from Turkey and provide the EU states with natural gas from the Caspian Sea basin. The Blue Stream, a major trans-Black Sea gas pipeline, is operational since November 17, 2005, and delivers natural gas from Russia to Turkey.

The Tabriz-Ankara pipeline is a 2,577 kilometers (1,601 mi) long natural gas pipeline, which runs from Tabriz in northwestern Iran to Ankara in Turkey. The pipeline was commissioned on July 26, 2001. In Erzurum, the South Caucasus Pipeline,



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convergence of member state energy markets on the basis of EU internal energy market principles, supporting sustainable energy development, and attracting investment for energy projects of common and regional interest.

**Q. What is your message to the people of South Sudan?**

A. First of all, I would like to congratulate South Sudanese people for this successful peace process and I wish all South Sudanese peaceful, happy and prosperous life in their country. I hope South Sudan will be one of the emerging economies in the region because South Sudan has all means and stability to develop fast, and I convey my best wishes to South Sudan. **Q. I visited Turkey recently and Turkish people are very friendly with good hospitality. What kind of South Sudan history will you tell your people when you go back to your country?**

A. South Sudanese are very friendly. I don't know entire Africa or African nations but despite that I believe South Sudanese people are very special people. First of all, they take pride in being a South Sudanese. This is important. If you have that as a nation, you will go forward. And secondly, your country is beautiful; the land is fertile; the climate is good and favorable, and at the same time, you have rich mineral resources. I believe in the future of the Republic of South Sudan. Maybe the Republic of South Sudan will be sort of locomotive of this region and even for the continent in the near future.

which was commissioned on May 21, 2006, is linked to the Iran-Turkey pipeline. In the future, these two pipelines will be among the main supply routes for the planned Nabucco Pipeline from Turkey to Europe.

Turkey has the fifth highest direct utilization and capacity of geothermal power in the world. The proportion of renewable energy in Turkey is twice the EU average, at around 25-26%. Turkey plans to raise this to 30% by 2023.

Turkey is a partner country of the EU INOGATE energy program, which has four key topics: enhancing energy security,