



A Turkish military vehicle patrols near the Türkiye-Iran border on 21 August 2021 in Van Province, eastern Türkiye. Turkish soldiers and special operations police are hard at work tightening measures to ensure the security of the country's eastern border with Iran to prevent illegal migration inflow from other countries including Afghanistan. Afghans fleeing the Taliban have been crossing the Turkish border illegally from Iran into Van. (Photo by Ali Ihsan Ozturk/Demioren Visual Media/ABACAPRESS.COM via Alamy)

# A Balancing Game of Janus

## Turkish Armed Forces' Border Security Measures

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*Editor's note: The use of "Türkiye" in lieu of "Turkey" in this article is at the request of the author. Türkiye is now officially used by NATO.*

Perhaps the most important side effect of irregular migration in the world today for any country that accepts it is the risk of destabilization. Today, Türkiye faces such a risk. Moreover, Türkiye's allies, especially NATO members, have been basically forcing it to face this problem alone—even with the massive uptick of irregular migration and refugees that occurred in 2015 with Russian intervention into the Syrian civil war. By way of comparison, the support given to Türkiye to assist with refugees and immigrants is nothing like the massive support provided to the neighboring countries of Ukraine that experienced a mass refugee migration due to the February 2022 Russian invasion. Moreover, Türkiye has had to deal with many more waves of people from different countries than Ukraine's neighbors.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, it is not possible to find a country that has been more competent or effective than Türkiye, both culturally and humanely, with regard to the challenge of dealing with the waves of irregular migration from Asia and Africa attempting to cross through its territory toward the West. However, Turkish society deserves and expects more empathy and more tangible support from its Western allies—especially members of NATO—to help deal with the issue of refugees and illegal migration.

## Context for the Problem of Illegal Immigration

Today's world is drifting from a place composed of relatively predictable socio-political black and white spaces—where stable areas can be easily distinguished from unstable areas characterized by identifiable threat and enemy spaces—toward a dystopian future where complex and wicked problems have made the distinction between black and white spaces at once blurred and entrenched, increasingly evolving into gray areas where "man is wolf to man." Much of this blurring has resulted from a dramatic increase in uncontrolled mass migration across borders that is overwhelming many nations' ability to manage the flow while also threatening to dilute established national identities with popular state loyalties.

In the progressively more "Hobbesian state of nature" world environment, the limited number of states that have achieved a certain level of prosperity and sociopolitical/economic stability have increasingly become targets of mass global migration from less developed areas of the world accompanied by greater infiltration of these more stable states and areas by terrorist and transnational criminal structures. This situation is distressing the more developed states and thus multiplying the number of unstable areas around the world and decreasing the predictability of the states targeted. For example, according to the report of the United Nations, 77 percent of the citizens of more developed countries are worried that irregular migration will negatively affect their economic and social life, which is two points above the world average of 75 percent.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the trend is self-promoting; an increase in the unchecked flow of people from unstable areas to stable ones, if unimpeded by an international effort, stimulates an even greater flow of irregular migrants. This puts stable states and their place in the current world order at much greater risk of instability, which in turn threatens to result in overall greater global instability.

Thus, many developed states have begun to look for ways to staunch the irregular waves of uncontrolled migrants crossing their borders that threaten their own internal stability and social welfare while cooperating with other states in their efforts to do the same. In short, it is now understood that it is no longer enough for countries to ensure the welfare of their native populations and internal stability alone. Today, many states perceive that while they themselves have achieved a certain level of prosperity and stability for their peoples, such conditions that may have made their nations islands of stability may

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have also turned them into targets that attract migrants from a sea of neighboring unstable states and restive populations; some of these stable states, on the other hand, have to deal with the multilateral problem of preventing waves of migration from penetrating the islands of stability as they share their borders with many unstable neighbors.

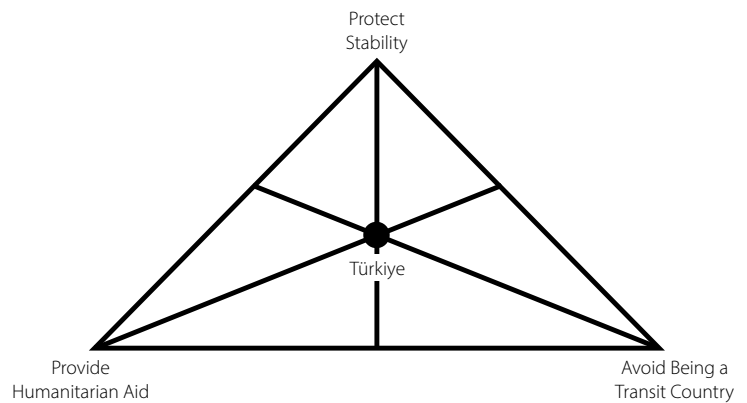
Like a gate guardian of a stable hemisphere, Türkiye is one such state struggling against uncontrolled migration from border neighbors such as Syria, Iraq, and Iran, as well as nonborder states such as Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Libya.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the measures it has taken to control illegal migration and mitigate its effects deserves closer examination by other nation-states for lessons learned.

## Türkiye as the Janus of a Stable Hemisphere

Janus, who is considered the god of the gate in Roman mythology, is depicted as having two faces, one looking at those who come to the city and the other looking after those who leave the city and ensuring their safety. Mythological beliefs aside, the lesson we can draw from the Janus myth is that transitional countries should have a multifaceted sense of security. Therefore, for Türkiye, the immigration problem has turned into a trilateral balancing game (see figure 1).

In this balancing game, on one hand, Türkiye has to protect its own population's stability and, on the other hand, has to avoid being used merely as a transit bridge for populations fleeing their countries of origin to reach West European states, the prosperity and liberal laws of which serve as a magnet for refugees and illegal migrants. Consequently, Türkiye has adopted measures that are intended to be both humane but cautiously prudent in providing appropriate levels of humanitarian aid to the civilians victimized by conflicts in neighboring countries while also helping irregular migrants decide upon their final destination.

Of course, Türkiye's political and economic character is not limited to that of the gate guardian of a stable hemisphere. As of 2022, Türkiye has reached its seventieth year as a member of NATO. Consequently, from NATO's perspective, Türkiye should be



(Figure by author)

**Figure 1. Trilateral Balancing Game of Türkiye**

perceived, respected, and valued as constituting the southeastern border of NATO that shares the collective NATO goals of peace and stability with its other members and its neighbors. As a NATO member, its highly professional armed forces and proven commitment to its NATO obligations have resulted in its place among the most reliable of NATO partners, as it has assured the defense of NATO's eastern flank both during the Cold War as well as in the post-Soviet era immediately following the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the emergence of destabilized states, most notably Iraq and Syria.

Türkiye continues to be an invaluable member of NATO up to the present day, applying its experience in hybrid warfare and counterterrorism against insurgent elements to help stabilize the Middle East and some Asian nations with which it shares borders. Additionally, Türkiye has been especially effective in countering elements conducting cross-border attacks against its own national territory from Syria and Iraq by a range of adversaries that include separatist and religiously motivated terrorists.

Notwithstanding, unstable regimes in bordering nations continue to be the main challenge of the complex security environment that Türkiye faces today. The unpredictability of such instability on its borders is the primary factor shaping Türkiye's defense organization, tactical doctrine, and defense industry, and it is the main reason for Türkiye's interest in mitigating irregular migration using its territory.



## Dealing with Border Security

The measures taken by Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) against the border security threats that it has faced in recent years will be described hereinafter in more detail. The military decision-making methods it has employed—such as operational design, factor analysis, and risk management—will be outlined for consideration by readers regarding measures against similar threats. To that end, a simplified and more understandable discussion to make the primary elements of the subject clear to the reader will be provided.

## Irregular Migration and Terrorism

To begin, irregular migration and the associated terrorism problem affecting the border security will first be framed. Next, the effects of irregular migration on border security and the problems it causes will be defined. Finally, the measures taken by TAF to mitigate the challenges posed will be outlined.

It should be noted as a methodological limitation that the main problem is not the morality or legality of immigration and the political debate different views engender. The focus of this article is operational border security measures that can be taken to mitigate irregular migration and counter the use of such migration by terrorist groups. Research data is based on open sources but insight concerning the analysis derives from the author's personal experience and mindset.

### Step 1. Framing the Problem

According to the International Organization for Migration's *Glossary of Migration*, irregular migration means "movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination."<sup>4</sup>

The phenomenon of irregular migration commonly emerges when underdeveloped countries are unable to provide sufficient social and economic opportunities for their populations, the individual security concerns of migrants (e.g., war, regional tensions, and civil war) cause them to seek a safer environment, or migrants think that they will not be able to have the opportunities that they desire in their own country in the future. Irregular migrants are further encouraged to travel to developed countries afflicted with labor shortages caused in part by aging populations that cannot meet labor needs. This

situation tends to favor lax enforcement of some developed states' migration laws.

Consequently, in such states, irregular migration is often perceived by the population as an "informal" rather than an "illegal" situation that can be overlooked if the social groups it affects and the impact it has on the social environment are deemed tolerable. Therefore, a large number of irregular immigrants working informally in the labor market in such receiving countries, who are technically illegal, are not perceived as criminal or illegal by ordinary citizens, which enables the migrants to maintain their presence in those countries. This popular perspective generally persists as long as it is limited to the labor market.

One other reason why irregular migration is not regarded with particular alarm by some governments and host-nation populations is that the characteristics of the immigrants and their status can change at any time. The presence of illegal immigrants is often seen only as temporary phenomenon because it is not possible to predict who they will be, or when, how, and in what direction they will act. Such migrants may choose without forewarning to attempt to move elsewhere or return to their home of origin.

These common perceptions apply within Türkiye, and many of Türkiye's native citizens have displayed remarkable tolerance and even a certain level of support for the irregular migrant presence. However, there have been emerging trends of concern that appear to show such tolerance is wearing thin. For example, due to the sudden influx of irregular migrants, Turkish labor markets in particular have experienced the relatively recent adverse effects of immigrants competing for jobs. More importantly, the waning passive tolerance for irregular immigration has gone a little further due to the emergence of different players exploiting such immigrants. As a result, the border security problems faced by Türkiye have five dimensions directly related to irregular migration:

- ◆ Unstable regions
- ◆ Geographical inevitability
- ◆ Multi-source migration
- ◆ Türkiye is not the final destination
- ◆ Türkiye's state tradition

**First dimension: the unstable regions.** The fact that countries are negatively affected by the problems arising from the unstable states around them is called

by some political science writers “bad neighborhood instability.”<sup>5</sup> According to this view, instability becomes contagious when opposition groups successfully begin introducing and promoting hostile ideas across borders that directly challenge the established social narratives of a host nation by calling into question national identity and state legitimacy. In a related manner, Luisa Blanco and Robin Grier state that countries in “conflict regions” may be exposed to “bad neighborhood

balance between the demands of many actors and the problems such demands generate. It is very difficult to strike such a balance, but Türkiye is one of the rare countries that has taken active steps to balance opposing destabilizing internal tensions within its neighboring states while protecting its internal national interests. As it continues its operations against the PKK in northern Iraq, it follows the masked activities of its Syrian extension and informs both its Western allies and Russia.

“Türkiye has to protect its own interests while establishing a fair balance between the demands of many actors and the problems such demands generate.”

instability” because certain states use refugees/illegal immigrants to intentionally violate and delegitimize borders while making territorial claims and also by enabling terrorist groups to use their territory as a base to launch cross-border attacks.<sup>6</sup>

I have highlighted the impact irregular migration has on regional political instability as a theoretical concept because Türkiye has been suffering from a problem of regional instability for many years that increasingly stems from irregular and illegal groups whose ideas challenge the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Turkish government. These groups sometimes include separatist terrorist organizations such as the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê* (Kurdistan Workers’ Party, or PKK) and the closely associated *Yekîneyên Parastina Gel* (People’s Defense Units, or YPG), and sometimes religiously motivated terrorist networks such as al-Qaida and the Islamic State.

Therefore, the first dimension of the problem faced by TAF is recognition that the risk of instability has reached the borders of Türkiye with increasing severity after the Cold War.

### **Second dimension: geographical inevitability.**

“Geography is destiny.” This quote is attributed by some to the famous Maghreb thinker Ibn Khaldun.<sup>7</sup> This maxim can successfully be applied to what has happened to any state throughout history. In the case of Türkiye, its geographical location provides it with great advantages but creates certain tensions. For this reason, Türkiye has to protect its own interests while establishing a fair

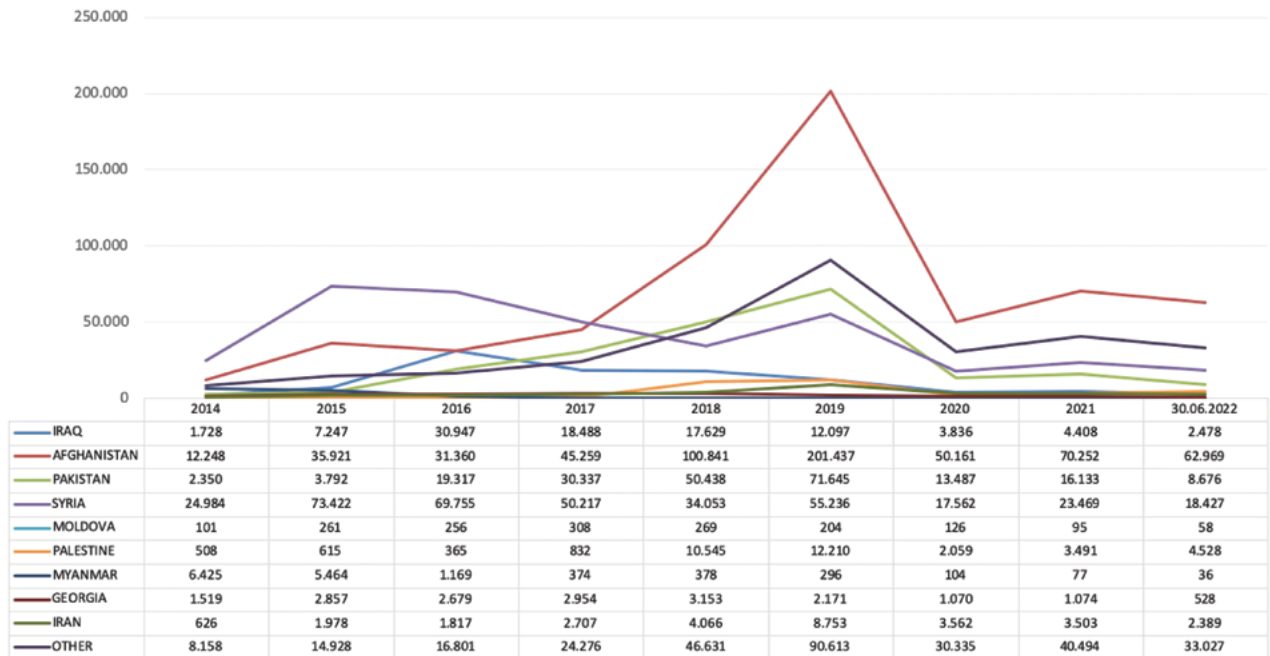
No other state in the world has had to ensure border security without escalating tensions with Russia, which has become a de facto border country, while pursuing common interests with its ancient allies.

### **Third dimension: the multisource migration.**

Since the civil war in Yugoslavia (1991–2001), Türkiye has been a safe destination for civilians from the states of the former Ottoman provinces to escape to and take refuge in during and after internal conflicts in those nations. Actually, this is nothing historically new. Türkiye has been the destination country of choice for many immigrant groups fleeing turmoil or persecution in other nations for nearly two centuries. For example, after the Russian Tsarist conquests in the Balkans, Crimea, the Caucasus, and central Asia in the nineteenth century, thousands of Crimean, Caucasian Muslims, and Turks immigrated to the Ottoman lands and were settled in eastern and central Anatolia.<sup>8</sup>

Also, after the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars, hundreds of thousands of Turks immigrated to Anatolia and were settled in western Anatolia. With the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne and 1930 Treaty of Ankara, the Greeks in Anatolia and the Turks in Greece were subjected to population exchange.<sup>9</sup> One vestige of this migration is that the number of immigrant Turks still called “muhajir”—migrant—among the citizens of the Republic of Türkiye is quite high.

The immigration story of the Republic of Türkiye does not end with those instances. In another more



\*By the date of 30.06.2022

(Figure from the Presidency of Migration Management)

**Figure 2. Distribution of Irregular Migrants by Citizenship by Year**

recent example, after the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan between 1979 and 1989, many Afghan citizens took refuge in Türkiye.<sup>10</sup> However, undoubtedly, the most famous of the migrations during the Cold War years was that of the Bulgarian Turks who migrated to Türkiye in the 1980s, fleeing oppressive persecution by General Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party Todor Zhivkov.<sup>11</sup>

Subsequent to the end of the Cold War, some motives for immigration have become very different. Except for the Yugoslavian Civil War, the number of malevolent terrorist groups mingling with the immigrants has increased considerably. For example, the PKK terrorist organization, taking advantage of the authority vacuum in northern Iraq after the first Gulf War, established its base in this region and infiltrated into Türkiye by hiding among tens of thousands of Peshmerga fleeing from Saddam Hussein's persecution.<sup>12</sup>

**Fourth dimension: Türkiye is not the last destination.** Irregular migrants traveling on the Eurasian continent do not only single out Türkiye as a destination. As we are witnessing once again in Ukraine today, immigration has become a major phenomenon

in the complex security environment of the twenty-first century. The ultimate desired destination for most of the immigrants appears to be the western European states. Consequently, due to its geographical location bridging the Middle East with Europe, Türkiye appears at present to be regarded primarily as a transit state rather than a final destination for many of the irregular migrants.

Although Türkiye is today protected by the strongest defensive measures in its history, the density of people pushing against its doors has reached dangerous levels in recent years.<sup>13</sup> Exacerbating the problem, the flow of people toward Türkiye's borders does not only originate from its neighboring countries or those in the near proximity. There have been a significant number of irregular migrants and refugees from nonbordering regions for years from a great many regions experiencing instability and conflict such as Afghanistan, Southeast Asia, Africa, eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Balkans, and recently, Ukraine.

Unlike the migrants in the history previously mentioned, many of whom selected Türkiye as a destination of choice because they shared the Islamic religion with Turks, the new migrants are often distinctively

different in terms of lifestyle and cultural traditions (see figure 2, page 6).

**Fifth dimension: Türkiye's state tradition.** It would be an incomplete approach to associate Türkiye's appeal as an important destination for irregular immigration in the last two centuries with just the advantages of its geographical location. Such an assessment would overlook the appeal of Turkish culture and state traditions. While Türkiye's approach to providing humanitarian aid is not a distinctive cultural characteristic different from other states, it is nevertheless important to emphasize that providing relief to and helping those fleeing from oppression is a Turkish national tradition independent of political tendencies. For this reason, it is important to point out that Türkiye is one of the rare nations that has sent aid to various parts of the world not directly affecting its interests or its borders, and it has accepted immigrants from many sources throughout history, sometimes even when such immigrants came from areas far away from having possible geographical influence on Türkiye's sociopolitical situation and interests. Moreover, sometimes Türkiye has provided migrant access even when it found itself in need of foreign help.

To illustrate Türkiye's long tradition of assisting migrants and refugees, after the 1492 Alhambra Decree by the Spanish Crown, many of the Jews and Muslims living in Spain and Portugal sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, during the Russian Tsarist conquest of central Asia in the 1860s, the destinations for many of the Turks fleeing from the Khanates of Kokand and Bukhara were the provinces of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>15</sup> Examples of Turkish generosity are abundant, but Turkish empathy and support for irregular immigrants and refugees has often been more generous than that demonstrated by many other nations.

## Step 2. Defining the Multidimensional Effects

Although it is possible to classify motives for migration according to certain general criteria such as reasons (forced and voluntary migration), purposes (work, asylum), and methods (legal, illegal) used to reach the goal, it is possible to also describe motivations spawned by other identifiable influences. Such include reasons rooted in ideologies stemming from such intellectual disciplines as economics, sociology, demography, geography, history,

psychology, international relations, and political science. Undoubtedly, irregular migration motivated by these factors might clash with and challenge the established sociopolitical order of the receiving state. This leads to four effects that can be derived from the aforementioned five dimensions of the problem:

- ◆ Increased risk of instability
- ◆ Geography becomes a target
- ◆ Whetting the appetite for illegal organizations
- ◆ Increased risk of sticking between two tensions

**First effect: increased risk of instability.** The flow of people from unstable regions to Türkiye poses risks to Türkiye's political stability. Apart from the economic and sociopolitical strain created by an influx of many new people, the main threat from irregular migration is the presence of outlaws intermixed with innocent people. Such outlaws benefit from the population blur created by chaotic disorder that makes malevolent actors hard to identify from others in the group.

**Second effect: geography becomes a target.** As a crossroads nation between states east and west as well as north and south, the geographical location of Türkiye makes it a favorite destination of irregular migrants who are not entirely sure in which direction they want to go. Therefore, as a result of how it is geographically situated, Türkiye historically has to take unusually strong countermeasures to control its borders.

**Third effect: whetting the appetite of illegal organizations.** As mentioned earlier, the local population tends to describe the crowds that come to their doorsteps for various reasons as irregulars, not illegals, to take advantage of the cheap labor potential that irregular migrants can provide. However, the drawback to such an attitude is that this lax and tolerant perception enables terrorists and other criminal organizations to mingle with such migrants as a device to infiltrate countries.

Moreover, where immigration and visa policies of developed states are more strictly enforced, criminal elements circumvent such policies using various human smuggling techniques such as

- ◆ making use of deserted land and coastal areas,
- ◆ using difficult terrains for crossing borders,
- ◆ creating artificial turmoil to distract border officials,
- ◆ crossing the border with a large crowd that the border security force is not able to cope with to create momentary infiltration points,



- taking advantage of the hidden parts of the vehicles,
- using fake IDs and passports,
- entering a country under false pretenses as a tourist and applying for asylum, and
- bribing border officers.

Among the methods noted, in Türkiye's experience, using entrances and exits from deserted land and coastal areas constitute the majority of actions aimed at moving irregular aliens across borders.

**Human smuggling.** Migration itself has historically been an activity involving just two main actors: nation-states and immigrants. However, since the Cold War, "human traffickers" and terrorists have been added as actors via the process of human smuggling.<sup>16</sup>

When we consider human smugglers, we come across three different profiles. First, there are amateur traffickers who take part in only a part of the immigrants' journey, such as conducting a river crossing, transporting irregulars from one point to another by vehicle, or merely by taking advantage of emerging opportunity arising from the evolving environment.

Second, there are professional traffickers, small groups of organized criminals who are more experienced than amateur smugglers and who have experience in orchestrating the most effective ways of transporting humans from one country to another.

Third are the international trafficking networks that can provide all types of documents that immigrants need, have access to a wide and developed net of social connections to meet the needs of residency in transiting through countries and other similar needs, are sophisticated in terms of remaining aware of quickly changing situations thanks to their officers on the travel route, and who are intimately knowledgeable of routes used for trafficking. Such trafficking routes often have already been established by international criminal organizations such as drug traffickers and are merely repurposed and adapted for the movement of people instead of products. (Not surprisingly, the repurposing of established drug routes explains why trafficked people and drugs are often moving simultaneously together.)<sup>17</sup>

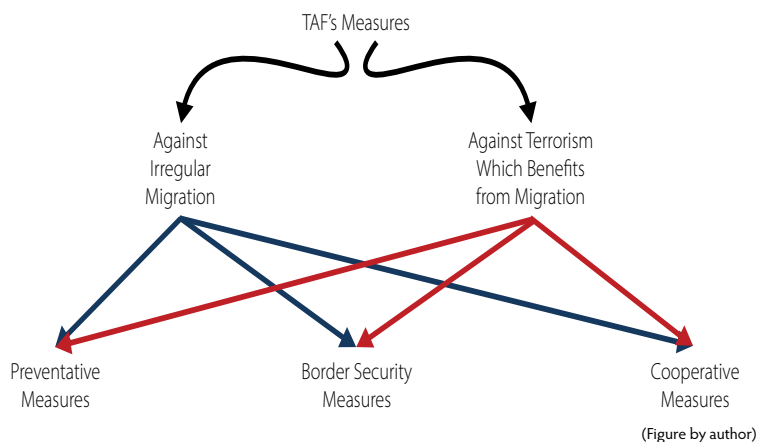
Since these three elements all serve illegal migration, they are grouped for purposes of the article in the same bracket.

**Terrorism.** While human trafficking primarily exists to make money for the traffickers, the primary motivation of terrorist organizations is to use targeted violence to achieve specific political goals. Though terrorism is basically different from human smuggling/human trafficking in motivation, in key ways they are intertwined.

Terrorist organizations often exploit people's grievances to position their operatives for their own political purposes. For this reason, there is a multidimensional and symbiotic relationship between terrorism and irregular migration. First, terrorists often personally conduct human trafficking to finance their organizations. Second, terrorist operatives use irregular migrants to infiltrate targeted countries by mixing with large migrant groups and posing as irregular migrants. Third, terrorist organizations actively attempt to recruit from irregular migrant groups, extract from the migrants other logistical needs, and obtain money from migrants by extorting them.

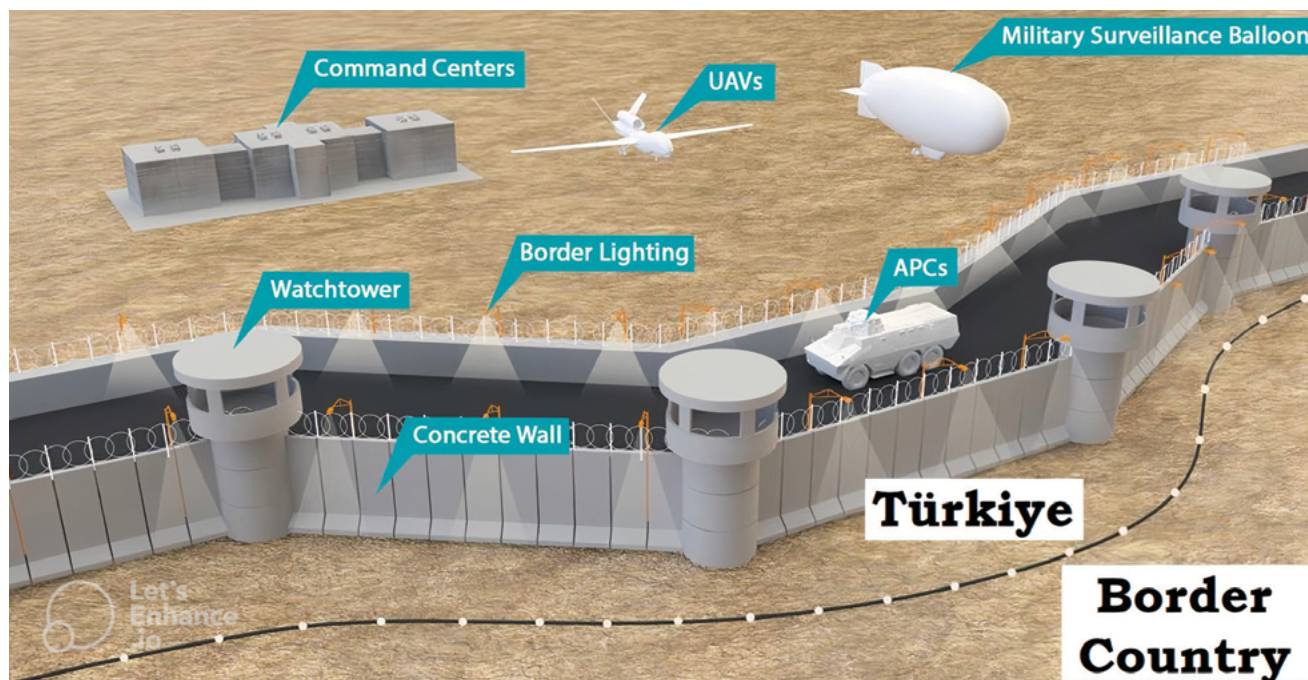
**Fourth effect: risk of sticking between two tensions.** The nature of being a transit country in irregular migration may leave Türkiye in the position of fulfilling the need for providing humanitarian aid while defending the stability of its own country. Seemingly every day, the world wakes up with a new international crisis that that routinely results rapidly in migration waves involving tens of thousands of people. Such waves of victimized people often expect help and protection from states like Türkiye to reach their destinations.

As noted previously, perhaps the most important side effect of irregular migration is the risk of destabilization.



**Figure 3. Turkish Armed Forces' Multidimensional Border Security Measures**





(Figure by author)

**Figure 4. Physical Border Security System**

Today, Türkiye faces such a risk and, as noted, does so lamentably with minimum assistance from NATO.

### Step 3. Turkish Armed Forces' Measures

In a situation where millions of people are on its borders, Türkiye does not have the luxury of waiting for its allies to get over their hesitation and prejudices and come to its aid. So, what kind of measures does TAF take, mainly without outside assistance?

TAF's measures for the immigration problem essentially are managed through application of a pragmatic cognitive process. Solutions to the problems produced by the regional instability are considered within the framework of this process to guide its actions through crisis situations. In this cognitive process framework, the measures are categorized for both irregular migration and terrorism under two main headings and six subheadings as shown in figure 3 (on page 8).

#### Step 3a: measures against irregular migration.

The issues posed by unstable neighbors and the environmental conditions in which these issues arise necessitate preventive measures taken across borders. Such measures can be applied in two ways. If the unstable neighboring state still has central control over its borders, TAF attempts first to come

to an agreement with the government of that state. However, if that state has no control over its own borders (which is often the case), it is necessary and appropriate for Türkiye, the violated state, to take action beyond the border.

In responding to uncontrolled areas beyond Türkiye's borders, the areas of interest are first monitored closely by technological systems and facilities such as military satellites, airborne early warning and control systems, unmanned aircraft systems, and modular temporary bases.<sup>18</sup> It is important to note that whatever necessary actions are then decided upon, the neighboring state is informed about every measure taken.

The measures taken at the border line against irregular migration differ according to each situation, and there are challenges associated with tracking the means of illegal entry of foreigners into a country, the length of stay such migrants have in the country, the time and manner of exit from the country, and the type of unauthorized work performed while in the country. Because it is irregular migration, the migrants involved are largely undocumented, which makes the system harder to manage or control day to day.

The problem is made more complex because the transportation of immigrants from the source country to the destination countries is often provided by

**Table. Symbiosis between Irregular Migration, Terrorism, and Smuggling/Trafficking**

	Infiltration		Recruiting		Spread	
	T/S/T	IM	T/S/T	IM	T/S/T	IM
Mutualism	+	+				
Parasitism			+	-		
Commensalism					+	0
T/S/T: Terrorism, Smuggling, Trafficking				IM: Irregular Migration		
+	Benefit	0	Ineffective	-	Harm	

(Table by author)

organized crime organizations, which are described as “immigrant smugglers.” Additionally, some migrant smuggling organizations pay a commission to terrorist organizations if they act as an intermediary in recruiting personnel to arrange the transfer of immigrants from conflict zones or regions within the borders of unstable states that remain under the control of those terrorist organizations.

In an effort to establish some measure of control, one mission of the border troops confronting large refugee movements arriving at the borders is to ensure that migrants are funneled through crossings at certain points in a controlled manner. This enables border troops to screen and assess irregular migrants following whatever principles and guidelines that are determined by the border authorities to be appropriate and necessary. Border troops may conduct body searches and disarmament to establish security at the crossing points. Additionally, border troop operations have been enhanced with advanced surveillance systems and other sensor-enhanced border security systems. (see figure 4, page 9).

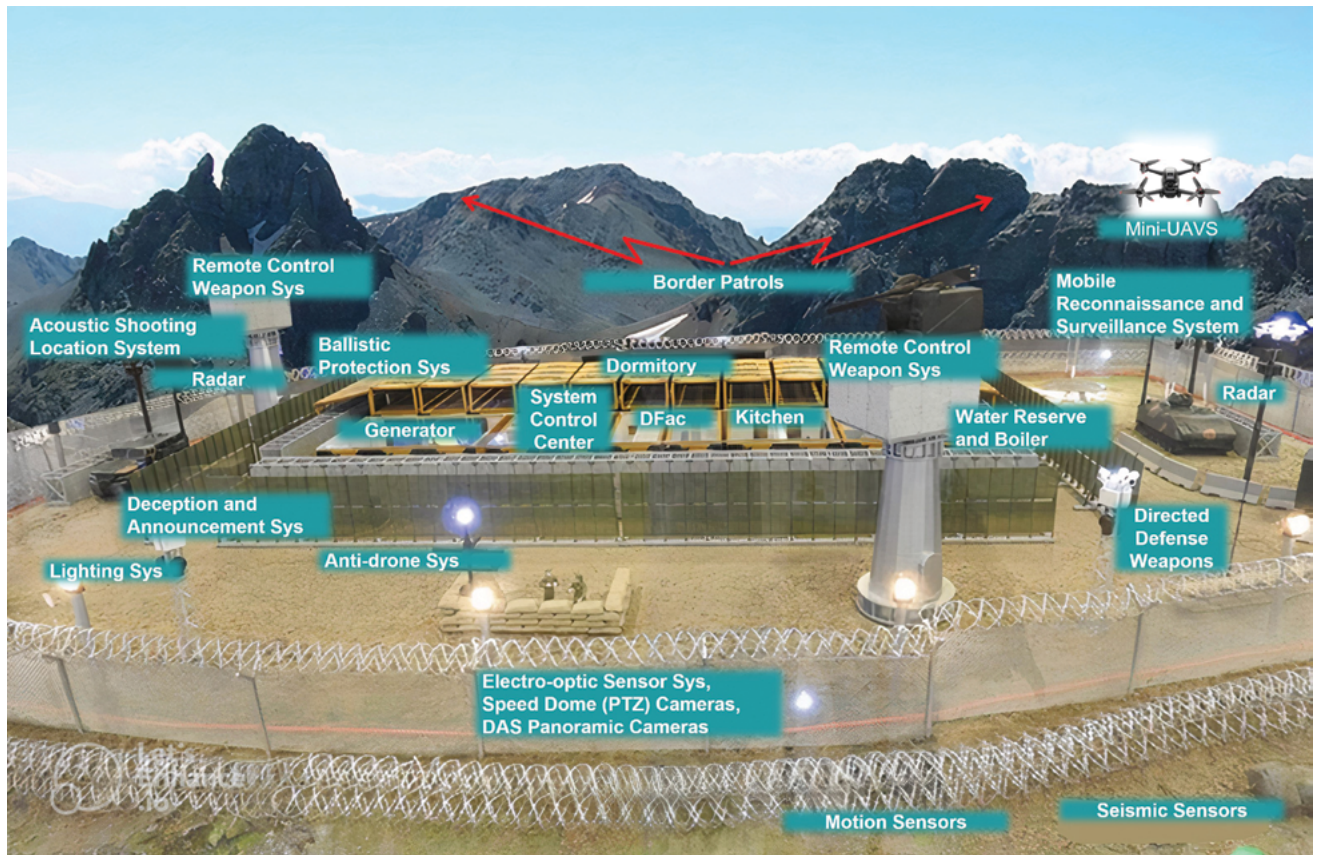
The cooperative measures among affected states against irregular migration are two-dimensional. While

cooperation with other states constitutes the first dimension, measures to be taken in coordination with other state institutions within the country constitute the second essential dimension of cooperative measures. These measures can include

- sharing of irregular migrants with neighboring states;
- sharing the financial burden among source, transit, and destination states in order to control irregular migration and stop it in certain regions;
- making realistic readmission agreements between target and transit states that can compensate for the grievance of transit states and implementation of these agreements in good faith;
- establishing temporary settlements in areas close to the political borders of countries that originate migration;
- providing logistic and financial support from international organizations within the scope of humanitarian aid; and
- convincing the source states to readmit their citizens.

**Cooperation with state institutions.** Effecting cooperation with and among internal state institutions is





(Figure by author)

**Figure 5. Modular Temporary Base as a Practical Measure against Terrorism**

optimally achieved with the creation of an organization responsible for the management of migration and having the authority to coordinate cooperative measures. Thus, Türkiye established the Presidency of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior in 2013, ensuring coordination among all state institutions. This office ensures cooperation and coordination on the issues regarding its borders with

- the official organization responsible for border security,
- the customs protection organization,
- the administrators of the border provinces,
- law enforcement agencies,
- the justice organization,
- the health organization,
- the social aid organization,
- the education organization, and
- humanitarian aid organizations such as the Red Crescent/Red Cross, disaster relief organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and international humanitarian aid organizations.

Cooperative measures do not end there. The armed forces should also be prepared to provide support to other public institutions in dealing with irregular migrants who have somehow managed to infiltrate the country. The authority and responsibilities of border units and other military units that will provide support to law enforcement should be guaranteed by detailed legal arrangements, leaving no room for hesitation or disagreement.

**Step 3b: measures against international terrorism.** Irregular migration facilitates the movement of terrorists who can mix with the people. This is a commensalistic relationship fed by the freedom of action and recruitment opportunities obtained from irregular migration; terrorists obtain significant benefits while irregular immigrants gain nothing. Additionally, the advantages terrorists gain further enables terrorist groups to expand their spheres of influence through illegal immigration (see the table, page 10).

Border security measures are taken to prevent both irregular migration and terrorist activities. Preventive

measures, depending on the geographical structure of the political border, determine the organization and equipment of both the border troops and the operational forces, and determine the center of gravity of the support to be provided to these forces. For example, in mountainous border areas, border troops are deployed to critical sections of terrain to control key avenues of approach. To compensate for the cover and concealment opportunities provided by the rough terrain to the terrorists, border troops are predominantly equipped with thermal surveillance systems.

borders as physical measures. As part of this, temporary surveillance and operational bases are established. Satellite, aircraft, and unmanned aircraft surveillance are utilized to the maximum extent. On the border line, outposts, which have effective surveillance and fire facilities and which can act as logistic support bases for crossborder operations when necessary, are established. Until the outposts are established and their activities stabilize an area, modular temporary bases are established to cover certain transit-escape directions (see figure 5, page 11).

“In order to render these deterrent methods useless and to nullify Türkiye’s legal efforts, terrorist organizations spread fake news against TAF and sometimes do not hesitate to shield civilians against military operations.”

Additionally, since the mountainous borders are very difficult to control by deploying troops and land surveillance, the escape routes beyond and behind the border line are closed by ambush/patrol (A/P) and reconnaissance/surveillance operations (R/S).

Land surveillance in flat border areas is easier than in mountainous areas. Such borders can be controlled by a smaller number of troops if adequate physical precautions are taken. Several rows of high wire fences, modular concrete walls, covered patrol routes, sheltered watchtowers, and seismic sensors are some of the physical measures that can be taken. A/P and R/S operations on flat border sections are standard physical security measures. Action histories in the area are kept accurately and terrorist infiltration, tunneling, and harassment shooting sites are restrained by A/P, R/S operations.

As a preventive method, emergency fire support is used in all kinds of border sections and in all situations, in accordance with the rules of engagement. In order to render these deterrent methods useless and to nullify Türkiye’s legal efforts, terrorist organizations spread fake news against TAF and sometimes do not hesitate to shield civilians against military operations. For this reason, TAF has to struggle with information pollution and manipulation. In this way, in addition to the measures within the scope of information operations, preventive security zones are formed beyond the

Mobile reserves composed of commandos and motorized units, border patrols, mini-unmanned aircraft, short wave infrared cameras, restricted vision cameras, seismic sensors, mobile reconnaissance and surveillance systems, and high-resolution smart cameras are also deployed to these modular bases. Additionally, ground surveillance radars and artillery and mortar detection radars are installed.

Cooperative measures against the threat from unstable regions requires military measures to be considered in two dimensions. The first dimension includes joint operations carried out only with national forces, and the second dimension includes operations carried out within the scope of the coalition formed with the participation of different countries. In line with needs and demands, the military units might carry out A/P and R/S operations in areas between the borders and the areas of responsibility of the law enforcement forces.

All types of operations, combined or joint, require phasing. Accordingly, the military operation should include the suppression and elimination of the terrorist threat in the first stage, the control of the unstable region in the second stage, and the execution of the stabilization operation in the third stage. Military professionals play an active role in this third-stage operation, which can be called “peace building.” Just like in irregular migration, cooperation with other institutions gains importance in stabilization operations.



The essence of the measures taken against regional instability is based on pragmatic military planning that will ensure the correct determination of the threat, the task, and the effective management of the crisis. Such pragmatic planning requires broad-minded and intellectual military decision-makers who can act in coordination with as many national security institutions as necessary for the realization of the politically desired end state. To achieve this, intelligence-based and intelligence-guided operations are planned against the terrorist leadership cadre, critical personnel, critical facilities, and weapon systems located beyond the borders, in coordination with intelligence agencies and law enforcement forces.

## Conclusion

One of the important factors creating and complicating the current security environment is irregular migration. This form of immigration is basically defined as foreigners entering, staying, leaving, and working inside a sovereign country illegally. Irregular migration alone poses a significant threat to economic, social, and national security. However, another problem stemming from such migration arises from its potential for aiding international terrorism that exploits its features. To mitigate both problems, military organizations should be involved with and assigned different duties for dealing with large refugee movements headed toward the borders.

Türkiye is one of the main destination and transit countries of migration movements in the world due to its geographical location and political/economic and cultural characteristics. Recently, irregular migration has become one of the main areas shaping Türkiye's relations with its Western allies. Finland and Sweden's application to NATO membership after the threat they perceived from Russia has once again revealed the importance of Türkiye's membership in NATO. The two newest countries, once in NATO, will provide new strategic opportunities to pacify international terrorism and mitigate irregular migration through cooperative relationships on many levels. For this reason, it is very important for these two countries to overcome Türkiye's reservations about terrorism with tangible measures to achieve their membership goals.

Meanwhile, ongoing operational-level measures aimed at mitigating the impacts of irregular migration and international terrorism on Türkiye, which constitute the main problems addressed in this article, are carried out with devotion by TAF. At the same, while ensuring the border security of its country, TAF is making the utmost effort to fulfill the humanitarian requirements of irregular migrants seeking a better life, and hopes that its allies will support it in its endeavors, as it has been actively providing support to NATO for seventy years. ■

## Notes

1. "Ukraine Refugee Situation," UNHCR Operational Data Portal, 20 May 2022, accessed 21 May 2022, <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>; "Irregular Migration," R.o.Tr. Ministry of Interior, Presidency of Migration Management, last updated 30 June 2022, accessed 15 May 2022, <https://en.goc.gov.tr/irregular-migration>. During the Russo-Ukrainian War, Poland has been the country that has received the most immigrants from Ukraine. As of 20 May 2022, 3,463,000 of the 6,444,000 Ukrainian immigrants have been accepted by Poland; The migrant situation in Türkiye is much more than that. According to the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM), there are 5,400,000 immigrants in Türkiye as of 5 May 2022. Approximately 3,600,000 of them are Syrians.

2. UN, *International Migration Policies: Government Views and Priorities (ST/ESA/SER.A/342)* (New York: UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division), 99.

3. UN, *World Migration Report 2022* (Geneva: IOM, 2021), 26, accessed 21 July 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3951157/files/WMR-2022-EN.pdf>; "Immigrants and Emigrants by Country of Citizenship, 2016-2019," Turkish Statistical Institute, accessed 14 July 2022, <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/>

[Index?p=Uluslararasi-Goc-Istatistikleri-2019-33709](https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Endeks?p=Uluslararasi-Goc-Istatistikleri-2019-33709). According to the 2022 report of the IOM, the Syrian Arab Republic-Türkiye corridor is the second largest migration corridor in the world after the Mexico-U.S. corridor. The twelve countries from which Türkiye receives over ten thousand people annually are as follows: Iraq: 83,829, Turkmenistan: 80,003, Afghanistan: 47,228, Syria: 43,190, Iran: 42,351, Azerbaijan: 26,563, Uzbekistan: 25,064, Russian Federation: 17,311, Egypt: 12,502, Libya: 12,082, Jordan: 11,268, Somalia: 10,290.

4. UN, *Glossary on Migration, International Migration Law 34* (Geneva: IOM), 116, accessed 21 July 2022, [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml\\_1\\_en.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_1_en.pdf).

5. Luisa Blanco and Robin Grier, "Long Live Democracy: The Determinants of Political Instability in Latin America," *Journal of Development Studies* 45, no. 1 (January 2009): 84.

6. Ibid: 76-95.

7. Abd Ar Rahman bin Muhammed Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (London: Routledge & Keagan, 1978), 233-39. Although there is no clear expression in his works as "geography is destiny," it is known that Ibn Khaldun stated that

geography is a determining factor on human life. In *The Muqaddimah*, which includes Ibn Khaldun's views on the effects of geography on people, culture, and economy, he follows an approach in the form of "geography is a determining factor." In the book, Ibn Khaldun states that "umran" (civilization) and society, which is a necessary prerequisite for umran, emerged in a geography and a climate, and that this climate had the features predicted. In *The Muqaddimah*, the world was divided into seven climate regions and societies were tried to be classified according to these regions.

8. Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims 1821-1922* (Princeton, NJ: Darwin Press, 1995), 23–58.

9. "Etabli meselesi," Atatürk Ansiklopedisi, accessed 21 April 2022, <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/etabli-meselesi-2/>. After the Balkan Wars, in 1913, separate agreements were made among Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Greece on population exchange. In the Treaty of Lausanne, based on the 1913 agreements, the Greeks in the region extending from the Aydın Province to the Gallipoli peninsula, and the Muslims in the Macedonia and Epirus regions of Greece were accepted as "établie (settled)." The établie problem, which had gone through various stages since Lausanne, was resolved with the Ankara Agreement of 10 June 1930, and according to the tenth and fourteenth articles of the Agreement, irrespective of the date of their arrival and their place of birth, the Greeks of Istanbul and the Muslims of Western Thrace were accepted as "établie."

10. "The Resettlement Act Number 2641," *Resmî Gazete* (website), accessed 21 April 2022, <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2007/05/20070502-5.htm>. Türkiye officially met with Afghan immigration for the first time in 1982, but this was not about irregular migration. 4,163 Afghan citizens of Turkish origin who took refuge in Pakistan due to the occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union immigrated to Türkiye legally with the Resettlement Act Number 2641, dated 19 March 1982, and have been living as citizens of the Republic of Türkiye for thirty-nine years.

11. "Bulgaria," Council of Europe, accessed 15 July 2022, [https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/country-monitoring/bulgaria/-/asset\\_publisher/llCM6m5KhFKp/content/human-rights-of-children-and-minorities-in-bulgaria-need-better-protection](https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/country-monitoring/bulgaria/-/asset_publisher/llCM6m5KhFKp/content/human-rights-of-children-and-minorities-in-bulgaria-need-better-protection). The Todor Zhivkov regime, which came to power in Bulgaria in 1956, oppressed the Turks in the country and started a campaign called "Revival" in 1984. The assimilation launched against Turks and Muslims living in the country with a population of 8.5 million aroused worldwide repercussions and reactions. Türkiye opened the Kapıkule Border Gate on 4 June 1989. At least 360,000 Turks and Muslims immigrated to Türkiye with the immigration wave, which is still known as the "Big Excursion" in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Parliament condemned the assimilation campaign in a statement approved on 11 January 2012. The statement said, "We declare the expulsion of more than 360,000 Turkish descendant Bulgarian citizens from the country in 1989 as an act of ethnic cleansing committed by the totalitarian regime."

12. "1988-1991 Iraklı Sığınmacılar Krizi," Türk Dış Politikası Krizleri, accessed 7 May 2022, <https://tdpkrizleri.org/index.php/1988-1991-irakli-s-g-nmac-lar-krizi/item/264-ana-say-fa-1988-1991-irakli-siginmacilar-krizi>. Around fifty thousand Kurds in the last days of August 1988 and around four hundred thousand Kurds in the last days of March 1991 fled the regime of Saddam Hussein and took refuge in Türkiye. The refugees were

settled in temporary settlements established in Diyarbakır, Muş, and Mardin in 1988, and in camps established on the Iraqi side of the Hakkari-Iraq border in 1991.

13. Presidency of Migration Management, "Irregular Migration."

14. Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 120. There is mention of such immigrants at the beginning of the fifteenth century; some may have come even earlier. They were, however, dwarfed into insignificance by the massive immigration of Sephardic Jews from southern Europe, from the end of the fifteenth century, following the edicts of expulsion against the Jews of Spain in 1492 and of Portugal in 1496. From this time, they began to arrive in the Ottoman domains in ever-increasing numbers.

15. McCarthy, *Death and Exile*, 29.

16. Protocol against The Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 15 November 2000, 2241 U.N.T.S. 480, accessed 21 July 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/migration/496323791b/protocol-against-smuggling-migrants-land-sea-air-supplementing-united-nations.html>. According to the Article 3a, "Smuggling of migrants' shall mean the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident"; Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 15 November 2000, 2237 U.N.T.S. 319, accessed 21 July 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons>. According to the Article 3a, "Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."

17. Andreas Schloenhardt, "Organized Crime and the Business of Migrant Trafficking: An Economic Analysis," *Crime, Law & Social Change* 32, no. 3 (1999): 203–33, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008340427104>.

18. Turkish military satellites are called "Göktürk," referring to the Turkish state that ruled in central Asia between 552 and 744 AD; Turkish airborne early warning and control systems, which derived from a contract between Turkish Aerospace Agency and Boeing Co.-USA in 28 January 2004 is called "Peace Eagle." Türkiye is one of the few countries in the world with an airborne early warning system; Turkish unmanned aircraft system technologies, which have become popular in recent years, started to be developed as a national technology in the early 2000s. Today, many Turkish companies, especially TAI, ASELSAN, HAVELSAN, and BAYKAR continue to work in this field; ASELSAN has undertaken the main contractor of the modular temporary base project. Currently, there are modular temporary bases in Türkiye's international border line, and in the risky areas close to the border within the scope of the UN Charter art. 51.