

TÜRKIYE AS A MEDIATOR POWER IN THE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION TO UKRAINE

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The Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory changed the perception of security and international law on the global level. We need to think about the future framework of regional cooperation in terms of security and sustainable development in the region having the country-aggressor on the eastern part of the continent. Russia is a historical threat to dominate the Black Sea region and control the straits. And it's our joint task now to stop the war for the benefit of the wider area.

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24 February 2022 is a day, when the whole world understood that Russia is an aggressor. Ukrainians understood this even earlier, as the occupation of Ukrainian lands started in 2014 with the occupation of Crimea and Donbas. One of the Russian arguments to start the invasion in 2022 was the danger of NATO coming to its borders with bases, armed forces, and heavy weapons. They also blamed NATO for creating the biological laboratories on the territory of Ukraine. Here is the tricky thing – the cooperation between Ukraine and NATO countries armies started in 2014 with joint trainings and practices. Since that time, the cooperation framework with NATO has been named “Enhanced Opportunities Partner – EOP”. This means that we are working together to enhance the capacity of the military forces and align their training activities. So, the argument for a close NATO presence for Russia was not accurate in 2014, and even in 2022, there were no discussions on NATO bases on the territory of Ukraine.

The whole world can see that Russia doesn't recognize any rules of war, or international law and demonstrates the total lack of humanity. This pushes us to think together about how to proceed after the victory of Ukraine. There is no doubt that Ukraine will win this war, the question is when, the sooner is the better, as fewer people will die and less infrastructure objects will be ruined. Time is a crucial fact here and with the support of partner countries, Ukraine can move faster to victory. The decisive position of the Turkish government and civil society to act in compliance with the principles of international humanitarian law, organize humanitarian corridors, respect the rights of children and civilians, as well as the Muslim and Turkic communities in regions affected by the Russian aggression and occupation since 2014, need to be continued.

Talking about global diplomatic efforts, we need to mention the UN's inefficiency in its current form. Obviously, the organization needs to be renewed, and here we need to continue the advocacy of reformatting/ expanding the UN Security Council. "The world is bigger than five" is a traditional call of the President of the Republic of Turkey, who is referred to five countries as permanent members of the UN Security Council. Russia is one of them and has the veto power, at the same time, the open

aggressor against the right of existence of Ukrainians. The continuation of the war threatens the food security of the entire region, especially the Middle East and North Africa. Ukrainian grain traditionally goes not only to the Turkish market but also to re-export to MENA countries.

We are grateful to Turkey as they already supported Ukraine on the way to the victory – by Bayraktars, the closure of straits for Russian ships, shuttle diplomacy and mediation services. At the same time, it is not enough and it's too early to relax. Ukraine has repeatedly asked to join the sanctions and close the sky, we still remember the position of Türkiye in its call to the international community to establish a no-fly zone in Syria to protect civilians, including Turkomans along the Syrian-Turkish border. The most significant value for Ukrainians now is peace and silence in our homes, readiness to cooperate, and willingness to solve problems exclusively through diplomatic methods, including with the mediation of Turkey. We definitely consider Turkey as a precious partner in negotiations and the future recovery of Ukraine.