

Turkey to Arm HTS as Kurdish Militants Reject Damascus Control

ANKARA (Dispatches) — Turkey will provide weapons systems, logistical support, and military training to Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) under a newly signed military cooperation agreement, a Turkish Defense Ministry source has confirmed.

The accord marks a significant step in Turkey’s expanding role in Syria, a country long beset by chaos and conflict since the ouster of President Bashar al-Assad.

HTS, the current ruling authority in parts of Syria, is known for its past affiliations with terrorist groups such as Daesh and Al-Qaeda, with its leader Abu Muhammad al-Jolani having a well-documented history in takfiri circles.

In a series of meetings between Turkish and HTS foreign and defense officials, as well as intelligence chiefs, the two sides inked a memorandum of understanding aimed at coordinating military training, sharing intelligence, and facilitating the procurement of weapons and logistical materials.



HTS foreign minister Asaad Hassan al-Shibani meets with his Turkish counterpart Hakan Fidan in Ankara, Aug. 13, 2025.

“The memorandum aims to coordinate, plan military training and cooperation, provide consultancy, information and experience sharing, ensure the procurement of military equipment, weapon systems, logistical materials and related services,” the Turkish Defense Ministry source said.

Turkey, a NATO member, has po-

sitioned itself as a key ally of HTS, pledging to assist in restructuring Syria’s armed forces and rebuilding the country’s fractured institutions. However, Syria remains mired in instability, with ongoing violence and a fractured political landscape.

Despite years of turmoil, HTS has largely failed to respond effective-

ly to repeated Israeli military incursions and occupation efforts in Syrian territory. Turkey has voiced concerns over the lack of progress and cohesion within Syria.

Turkey has also expressed frustration with the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which it regards as an extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Ankara criticizes the SDF for their failure to fully integrate into Syria’s political system and continues to threaten military action against them.

The Turkish Defense Ministry described the SDF’s actions as “provocative and separatist,” undermining Syria’s territorial integrity.

Turkey maintains a significant military presence in northern Syria, controlling swaths of territory along the border after a series of operations targeting the SDF. The situation remains volatile, with competing forces vying for influence amid a backdrop of foreign occupation and ongoing violence.

Iran...

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and the IAEA must have a protocol for that.”

Araghchi also referred to a recent law passed by Iran’s parliament, which makes future cooperation and inspections conditional on approval by the Supreme National Security Council.

“Before granting access and renewed inspections, a new framework for cooperation between us and the IAEA must be clarified. We need to negotiate and design this framework. It will be based on parliamentary law and field realities. If we reach an understanding, cooperation will start accordingly.”

This understanding must take into account the parliamentary law, national security issues, and the approval of the Supreme National Security Council and the Council must grant permission, he said.

Araghchi mentioned a recent visit by an IAEA delegation, noting that an entire day was dedicated to joint negotiations with the Foreign Ministry and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, during which initial ideas were exchanged.

“Our representatives have communicated these ideas to the IAEA for review, and negotiations are ongoing. I believe it was not a bad start, but it will take time to reach an agreement.”

Aref...

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“Iran believes that outside interventions will not contribute to sustainable regional security. We emphasize solidarity and the preservation of territorial integrity among countries.”

In a sideline meeting with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Aref emphasized the importance of strengthening Iran-Russia relations, particularly on regional issues.

He highlighted Iran’s “full readiness to expand bilateral, multilateral, and regional cooperation,” referencing ongoing nuclear talks and criticizing Western countries for politicizing Iran’s peaceful nuclear program.

“Israel’s attacks, carried out in collaboration with the U.S. during indirect negotiations, targeted our scientists and military commanders without any logical justification,” Aref said “Despite America’s claims, Iran remains committed to peaceful nuclear technology and confidence-building.”

He reiterated Iran’s opposition to unilateralism, saying, “Like Russia, we oppose U.S. unilateral policies and believe regional security and stability should be pursued through multilateral strategies involving regional actors alone.”

Aref underscored the strategic importance of Iran’s cooperation with the EAEU and Russia, calling it “a long-term strategy to build a strong region by strengthening national sovereignties, facilitating transport and trade in energy, developing technology, and establishing joint financial infrastructures.”

Russian Prime Minister Mishustin praised the “significant increase” in Iran-Russia economic ties and stressed the importance of the North-South transport corridor as key to deepening regional relations.

He also emphasized that “all regional countries should maintain relations based on good neighborliness to build a shared future.”

Aref’s visit to Kyrgyzstan and his upcoming talks in Kazakhstan reflect Tehran’s eastward pivot amid sustained Western sanctions and diplomatic pressures.

“The future of Iran’s economy lies in regional integration,” Aref said before departure. “This is not just about diplomacy — it’s about building real, sustainable economic alternatives for the country.”

The delegation includes Iran’s Minister of Industry, Mines, and Trade, as well as senior officials, signaling Tehran’s commitment to cementing ties with the EAEU and Central Asian partners.

Larijani...

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said, “The Americans’ anger stems from their view of how to ensure security in the region... Trump has said he wants to create peace through power, whereas our view is completely different.”

“Resistance is a great asset for the countries of the region and the Islamic nation, and it must be supported wherever it exists... Our position is not sectarian.”

Larijani also pledged, “If the Lebanese government requests military assistance from us, we will help.”

New Zealand MP Ejected Twice for Calling for Spine Over Gaza

WELLINGTON (Dispatches) — A New Zealand parliamentarian was twice ejected from the legislative chamber following a passionate call for the government to sanction Israel over its military aggression in Gaza, highlighting growing frustration over Wellington’s reluctance to recognize Palestinian statehood.

Chlöe Swarbrick, co-leader of the left-wing Green Party, was first ordered to leave the chamber on Tuesday after urging fellow lawmakers to show “a spine” and support her motion to impose sanctions on Israel over its “genocidal” campaign

in Gaza.

“If we can find six of 68 government MPs with a spine, we can stand on the right side of history,” Swarbrick said.

Despite receiving a rare three-day suspension, Swarbrick returned to parliament the following day and was expelled again for reiterating her stance.

Parliamentary Speaker Gerry Brownlee subsequently invoked an uncommon disciplinary action, calling a vote to formally censure Swarbrick for misconduct. The motion, which carried unanimous support from governing coalition members,

resulted in her suspension with a salary deduction.

The events unfolded amid mounting criticism of the New Zealand government’s refusal to formally recognize Palestine as a sovereign state. This contrasts with recent developments in Australia, where Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has confirmed plans to recognize Palestinian statehood at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly in September. France, Britain, and Canada are also expected to follow suit.

The State of Palestine currently holds recognition from 147

of the 193 UN member states, representing approximately 75 percent of the international community.

On Wednesday, New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon condemned Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying he “has lost the plot” amid escalating violence in Gaza.

Luxon described the ongoing humanitarian crisis — including the lack of aid, forced displacement, and Israel’s de facto annexation of Gaza — as “utterly appalling,” noting Netanyahu had “gone way too far.”

South Sudan Denies Israeli Talks to Accept Expelled Gazans

JUBA/GAZA (Dispatches) — South Sudan has firmly denied reports claiming it was in talks with Israel to accept Palestinians displaced from Gaza, rejecting the allegations as baseless and not representative of its official policy.

The statement from South Sudan’s Foreign Ministry followed an Associated Press report citing six informed sources, which alleged that Israel had approached Juba in recent months to discuss transferring Palestinians from the blockaded enclave.

“These claims are baseless and do not reflect the official position or policy of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan,”

the ministry said.

Despite the denial, Israeli deputy foreign minister Sharren Haskel visited Juba on Wednesday and met with South Sudanese President Salva Kiir, one day after the AP report was published.

Israel’s foreign ministry declined to confirm to Al-Monitor whether the issue of Gaza’s population was discussed during the visit.

Two Egyptian officials confirmed to AP that Cairo had been aware of such Israeli contacts with South Sudan and had previously urged Juba not to cooperate.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has publicly endorsed

the removal of Gaza’s population, referring to it as a legal wartime measure. In an interview with Israel’s i24 News on August 12, he stated: “The right thing to do, even according to the laws of war, is to allow the population to leave, and then you go in with all your might against the enemy who remains.”

The idea aligns with a broader plan first proposed by former U.S. President Donald Trump earlier this year, which advocates resettling Palestinians outside Gaza.

According to media reports, Israel and the United States have contacted multiple countries, in-

cluding Libya, Indonesia, Uganda, Somaliland, Morocco, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates, as potential relocation destinations.

Israel’s Channel 12 claimed that some countries—particularly Indonesia and Somaliland—have shown interest in the so-called “voluntary migration” initiative, though human rights groups argue the plan amounts to forced displacement, in violation of international law.

Most Jewish settlers reportedly support the expulsion of Palestinians from Gaza, as the war with Hamas continues into its tenth month.

German Firm Weighs Relocation to U.S. to Sell Arms to Israel

BERLIN (Dispatches) — German military contractor Renk Group, a key supplier of tank components to Israel, has indicated it may seek to relocate production outside Germany in response to Berlin’s recent decision to halt arms exports to the Zionist regime over its atrocities in Gaza.

In an interview with the Financial Times, Renk CEO Alexander Sagel said the company feels a “responsibility” to ensure Israel’s armed forces maintain operational capabilities, despite German Chancellor Friedrich Merz’s announcement that no new military equipment sales to Israel would be authorized “until further notice.” Sagel acknowledged that Renk was still

assessing the full impact of the embargo but confirmed the company was considering a “plan B” involving the relocation of production of specific tank transmissions to the United States if Germany’s security council upholds the ban.

Asked about the ethical implications of supplying military equipment to Israel amid its Gaza offensive, Sagel described the issue as “a difficult discussion.”

Renk holds contracts to provide Israel with “hundreds” of tank gearboxes, making it a significant contributor to Israel’s armored capabilities.

Chancellor Merz’s decision came amid growing international criticism of Israel’s

Gaza invasion, which intensified after the Israeli cabinet voted to proceed with a controversial plan to occupy Gaza City.

Germany is Israel’s second-largest arms supplier after the United States. Despite the ongoing genocide and mounting criticism, Berlin has exported weapons worth approximately €485 million (\$564 million) to Israel since launching its war on Gaza.

Public opinion in Germany appears to be shifting: a recent poll by the Forsa Institute found that 74 percent of Germans support increased government pressure on Israel due to the severe humanitarian crisis in Gaza.