

Türkiye-Indonesia Relations in 10 Questions: Diplomacy, Trade and Global Challenges

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1. In the context of the growing cooperation on a global scale between two major Muslim countries such as Türkiye and Indonesia, how do you think this friendship can serve as a model of solidarity not only between the peoples of the two nations but also within the broader Islamic world?

With their geographical and geostrategic positions, abundant resources and capabilities, economic weight, growing influence, and shared demands for reform of the prevailing global order, Türkiye and Indonesia are building a model of interaction and solidarity that extends well beyond their national borders. Türkiye, as a bridge between Europe and Asia and a country located at the intersection of the Middle East, Africa, the Balkans, and Eurasia, possesses a broad sphere of influence. Indonesia, meanwhile, as the world's most populous Muslim-majority country and the leading economic and military power of ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), wields considerable influence across a vast region. Moreover, both countries' approaches to addressing global challenges largely converge. Taken together, these dynamics suggest that the positive diplomatic relations, which have recently reached a peak, hold the potential to lead a wider network of solidarity between the two nations. In recent years, education diplomacy has emerged as a key instrument of soft power in international relations.

2. What opportunities do universities, academic exchanges, and student mobility programs between Türkiye and Indonesia offer? In your view, what further steps can be taken to foster stronger cooperation in this field?

Education diplomacy has become a phenomenon of growing significance on a global scale. As of 2024, records show that 6.3 million international students worldwide correspond to an economy worth 350 billion dollars. Both the number of international students and the economic value they generate continue to rise steadily. Currently, Türkiye hosts 330,000 international students.

Among these students, there are 5,500 Indonesians, and as the interaction between our universities continues to grow, this number is expected to rise further, thereby accelerating the rapprochement between the two countries.

Indonesian students who come to Türkiye either through scholarships provided by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) and various foundations, or through their own means, along with academics visiting Türkiye through exchange programs, serve as an important bridge. From the very beginning of my tenure as Ambassador, we have taken initiatives to enhance cooperation opportunities between our universities.



Through these efforts, the Türkiye Maarif Foundation has established a Türkiye Studies Center within the University of Indonesia, while the Yunus Emre Institute has also launched Turkish language programs at various universities. At this point, it is also important to emphasize the collaborations established and developed in the fields of scientific and technological research through universities. Furthermore, it should be noted that the contributions of Türkiye's alumni to bilateral relations have now begun to emerge more visibly. Considering all these dimensions, I would also like to add that increasing the number of scholarships allocated by YTB to Indonesia would be highly beneficial.

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- 3.** In your view, how can closer people-to-people ties between Türkiye and Indonesia be fostered through the universal language of culture and the arts? What are your thoughts on potential projects that could be developed around shared heritage, traditions, and cultural diversity?

The relations between Türkiye and Indonesia date back to the 16th century. The ties established centuries ago between the Ottoman Empire and the Sultanate of Aceh have been passed down from generation to generation, remaining vivid in the collective memory. This year, we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Culture and the arts represent a vital richness, both in these celebrations and in the broader development of bilateral ties. For instance, with this purpose in mind, we have organized a series of exhibitions. The building that today serves as the Jakarta Textile Museum once functioned as the residence and office of the Ottoman Empire's first Honorary Consul.



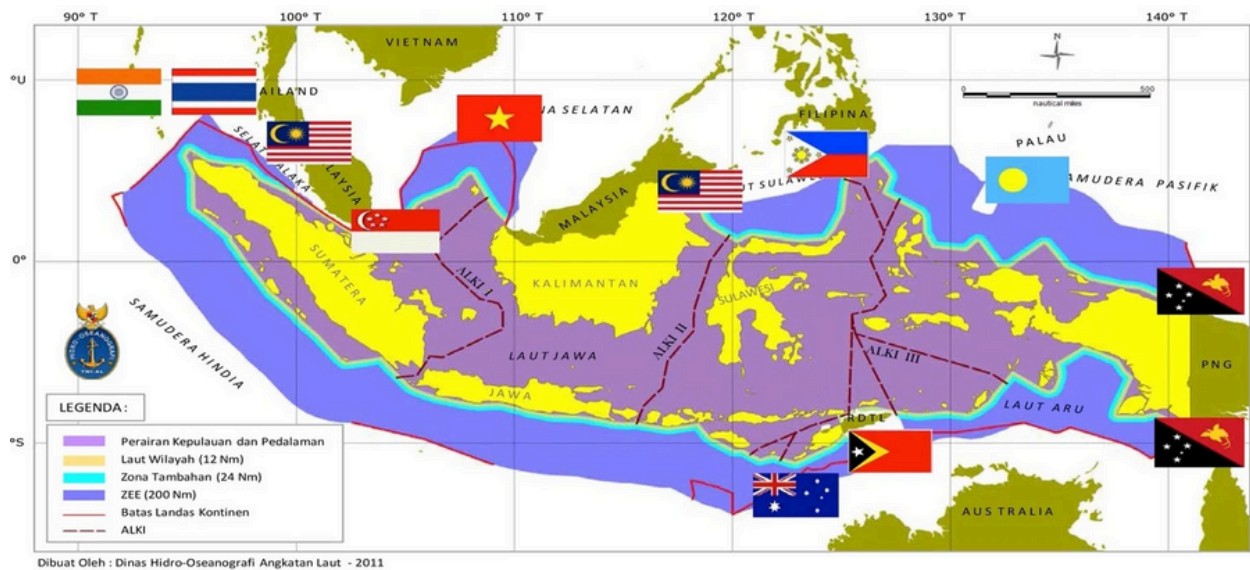
In consultation with the museum administration, we expressed our wish to place a marble plaque at the entrance of the building, and they kindly accepted. Very soon, a plaque will be installed at the entrance of the Jakarta Textile Museum to remind all visitors of this historical fact indeed, of the profound historical depth of our relations. Turkish TV series are among the most watched in Indonesia, which is highly significant in terms of our cultural diplomacy. Based on our observations, filming certain episodes of these series in Indonesia could further multiply the local interest in Turkish productions.

Indonesia's Minister of Culture, Mr. Fadli Zon, is both a cultural figure and a politician who attaches special importance to and feels a strong affinity with Türkiye. A cultural cooperation agreement has recently been signed between the two countries. Moreover, during meetings between our ministers, it was agreed in principle to launch a joint film project. We are now awaiting the commencement of discussions between the relevant institutions regarding the details of this project.

4. How can a synergy be established between Türkiye's "Asia Anew" initiative and Indonesia's "Global Maritime Fulcrum" strategy? In what ways can these visions of the two countries contribute to regional peace and development?

Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelagic state with vast maritime boundaries, has placed its "Global Maritime Fulcrum" (Poros Maritim Dunia) policy at the core of its foreign strategy, a vision comparable to Türkiye's "Blue Homeland" doctrine. This policy, aimed at safeguarding maritime borders and securing economic resources particularly revenues from fisheries has made Indonesia's presence in the Indo-Pacific more visible. In broad terms, the Global Maritime Fulcrum approach emphasizes a stronger focus on maritime trade in the increasingly competitive Indo-Pacific region, the modernization of existing ports and the construction of new ones, as well as the strengthening of maritime security, transportation, and trade infrastructure. The primary expectation from this strategy is to contribute to Indonesia's economic development and defense, placing the sea at the center of the country's national interests. Türkiye's "Asia Anew" initiative, designed as a broad-based opening that also encompasses Indonesia, aligns with this perspective.

The overlaps between Türkiye's "Blue Homeland" vision—along with its military, commercial, and energy exploration investments in the maritime domain—and Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum strategy are striking. Both countries continue to pursue their maritime cooperation in ways that complement their respective capacities and capabilities. In the medium and long term, the Asia Anew initiative holds the potential to further strengthen the foundations of cooperation in maritime affairs, enabling the two countries' joint efforts at sea to make even greater contributions to regional and global peace and stability.



5. Indonesia holds a prominent leadership position within ASEAN. How do you assess Indonesia's role in Türkiye's relations with ASEAN? In this context, what opportunities stand out in the field of multilateral diplomacy?

Indonesia holds the position of being the ASEAN country with the largest population, economy, and influence. As the host country of the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, Indonesia carries significant weight in diplomatic relations with ASEAN.

At present, Türkiye maintains its relations with ASEAN as a Sectoral Dialogue Partner, and we have also submitted our application for Dialogue Partnership. We conducted face-to-face meetings with the permanent representatives of all ten ASEAN member states to seek their support. Both Malaysia, as the Chair, and Indonesia, as the host country of ASEAN, expressed their full support. The permanent representatives of the 10 member states also indicated their endorsement of Türkiye's application for Dialogue Partnership. Undoubtedly, Indonesia's expression of commitment in this regard is of great value to us. Türkiye's engagement with ASEAN is important not only from a diplomatic perspective but also in terms of strengthening our economic relations with its population of nearly 700 million, whose purchasing power is steadily increasing. We continue to advance in this direction.

6.

Trade and investment serve as the driving force of relations between the two countries. What concrete steps are being taken to advance free trade agreements between Türkiye and Indonesia and to build bridges among business communities? As an Ambassador serving in Indonesia, what opportunities and advantages would you recommend to Turkish businesspeople and entrepreneurs in this vast market? In particular, what potential do you see in the fields of digitalization, green transformation, and sustainability?

The bilateral trade volume between Türkiye and Indonesia is currently around 3 billion dollars, falling short of the 10 billion dollar target set by the leaders of the two countries. However, in the past year or two, the growing interest in and demand for defense industry products has brought us to the threshold of a significant leap in trade volume. The absence of a free trade agreement between Türkiye and Indonesia naturally affects the scale of bilateral trade, as our trade with countries that do have such agreements is considerably higher. Nevertheless, rather than perceiving this as an obstacle, we are focused on exploring ways to generate solutions.

We proposed to the Indonesian side the signing of a Preferential Trade Agreement, and this proposal was welcomed, with the first round of exploratory consultations already held. We hope that in the near future such an agreement, covering products to be mutually agreed upon, can be concluded, as there currently appear to be no obstacles in this regard. In addition, to enhance commercial interaction, we are bringing together Indonesian counterparts both at the ministerial level and through our umbrella organizations such as the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM).

We are also encouraging our producers to participate in trade fairs held in Indonesia. With its economy growing at an annual rate of 5 percent, Indonesia is an important attraction point for investors. We are encouraging mutual investments in strong sectors from both countries. For example, during our meeting with the Indonesian Minister of Investment, we invited the newly established Danantara Investment Fund holding assets worth 900 billion dollars to consider investing in Türkiye in sectors such as defense, transportation, tourism, food, energy, and health. In the coming days, we will continue to deepen our discussions in this direction.

At the same time, we regularly provide information to our relevant institutions in Türkiye regarding investment opportunities in Indonesia, asking them to share these insights with their stakeholders.



7.

The young populations of both countries are highly dynamic and productive. Are there any initiatives supported or planned by your embassy to enable our youth to get to know each other more closely and to take part in joint projects?

Indonesia has a population of 280 million, 52 percent of whom are under the age of thirty. This means a very large portion of the population is in its most productive years, making it critical that they receive quality education sufficient to enable their participation in production. As Türkiye, we are striving to contribute to the education of youth through the scholarships we provide and will continue to provide. To increase their interaction with Turkish youth, we also host Indonesian students in Türkiye through the Yunus Emre Institute and civil society organizations. At present, the 5,500 Indonesian students studying at Turkish universities are already interacting with their Turkish peers. This can be further strengthened through the initiatives of our rectors. If our universities could implement projects that bring not only Indonesian students but also the more than 330,000 international students together with their Turkish peers and families, the resulting cultural and human interaction would leave a much deeper impact.

8.

Indonesia's spicy and aromatic cuisine and the rich diversity of Turkish gastronomy share many similarities and complementarities. If a diplomatic gastronomy project were to be designed to bring these two culinary traditions together, which flavors do you think could take the lead in this dialogue?

Every year, as the Embassy, we organize special programs in Indonesia to introduce Turkish cuisine, our coffee culture, and breakfast traditions. For this purpose, we occasionally invite well-known chefs from Türkiye to present a variety of dishes, desserts, and beverages. For example, in 2025 Chef Recep Incecik came to Jakarta and delivered outstanding presentations. Officials, artists, media representatives, and gastronomy experts who attended the tastings expressed their admiration.

Chef Recep Incecik also gave a lecture at a culinary school, teaching aspiring chefs about our traditional dishes while placing special emphasis on the concept of zero waste. In addition, he appeared on a live broadcast of Sea Today TV, preparing and serving Turkish dishes.

As the Embassy, we also hosted Indonesia's Minister of Culture, Mr. Fadli Zon, and his delegation at a traditional Turkish iftar during Ramadan. For the first time worldwide, a minister paid an official visit to the Yunus Emre Institute and attended the iftar program we organized. During the event, Minister Fadli Zon also enjoyed a highly impressive live performance of the whirling dervishes. In this way, traditional elements of Turkish cuisine were presented at the highest level to Indonesia.



Indonesia also possesses a remarkably rich culinary culture. As a country made up of thousands of islands, each region has its own distinct dishes, contributing to a diverse gastronomic heritage. Naturally, Indonesia's identity as a land of spices continues to draw the world's attention today, just as it did in the past. Rice and an abundance of spices are indispensable elements of Indonesian cuisine. Considering the richness of both countries' food and beverage traditions, it is clear that there is great potential to create a fusion cuisine. However, it would be more appropriate to leave the question of how to bring forth a shared flavor from these two culinary traditions to the expertise of professionals in the field.

9. Drawing on both your academic background and your diplomatic experience, how do you think this friendship can be further strengthened with a new regional and global vision as we approach the 2030s?

In 2022, a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council was established between Türkiye and Indonesia. The first meeting of this council took place in February 2025 during the visit of our President to Indonesia, with the participation of numerous ministers from both sides. During this summit, comprehensive discussions were held, and 12 cooperation agreements were signed. In April, Indonesian President Mr. Prabowo Subianto paid a visit to Ankara, during which additional agreements were concluded.

At this point, it would not be an exaggeration to say that diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Indonesia have reached a historic peak. The task ahead is to ensure the effective implementation of the agreements signed, to make the best use of new opportunities, and to systematically maintain and enhance both face-to-face and institutional engagements. If these steps are taken, by the 2030s our relations will become much stronger, and their regional and global implications will be felt even more clearly.

10.

In this period when a multipolar order is taking shape at the global level, what contribution do you think regional powers such as Türkiye and Indonesia can make to the construction of a “just and inclusive international system”?

Türkiye has long shared with the world its vision that “a more just world is possible” and that “the world is bigger than five,” working toward reforming the established international order to make it more inclusive and representative. Indonesia, as a country pursuing a neutral and effective foreign policy, has in recent years begun to voice similar positions. Acting together, and with the participation and support of other like-minded stakeholders, both countries hold significant potential to contribute to the construction of a “just and inclusive international system.”

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