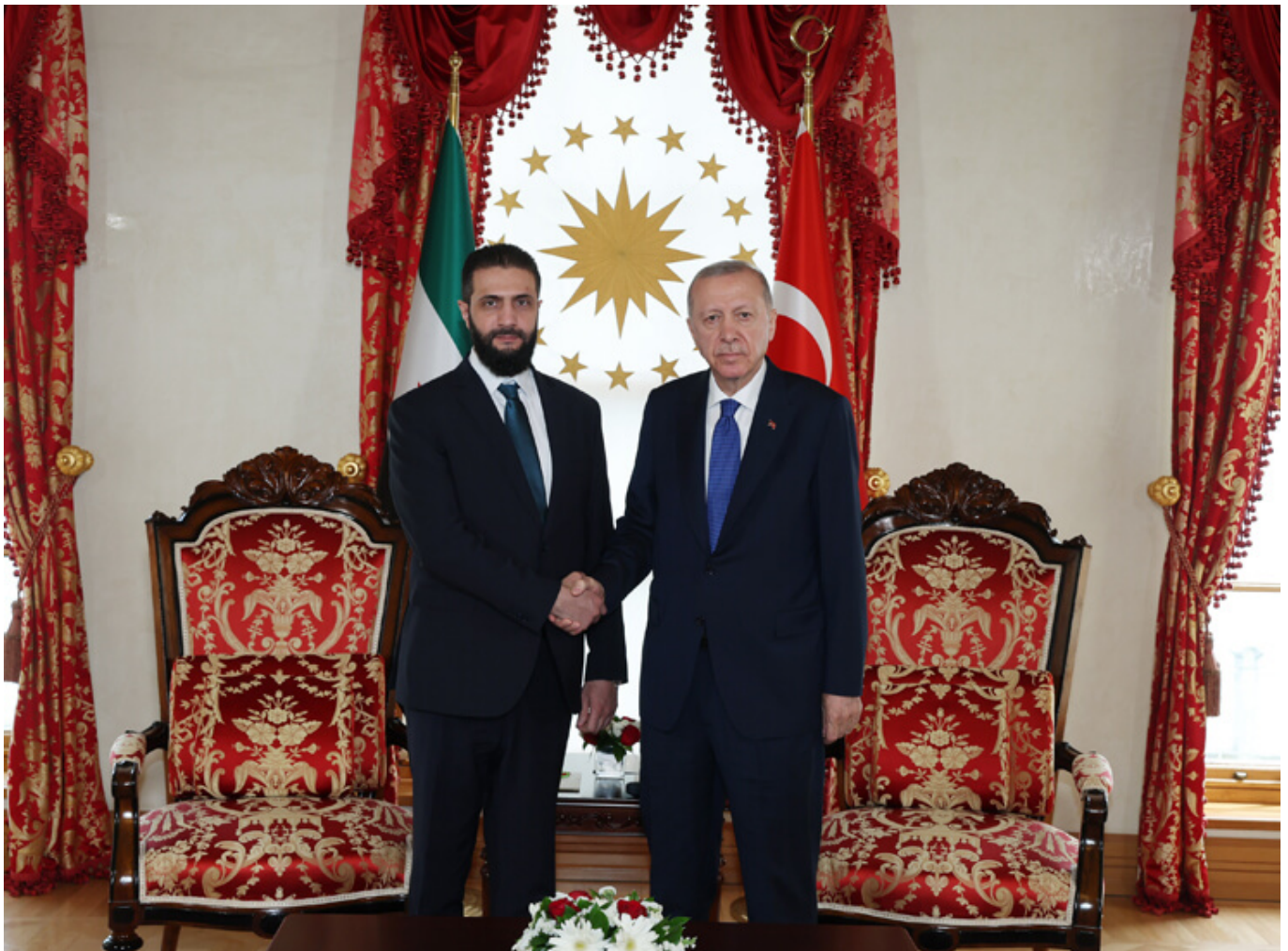




By: TA | AP Brief

Turkey will provide weapons and support to Syria under new defense agreement



Turkey will provide weapons, military equipment, and logistical support to Syria under a newly signed defense cooperation **agreement**, Turkish Defense Ministry officials said.

The announcement came a day after Turkish Defense Minister Yasar Guler and Syria's Defense Minister Murhaf Abu Qasra signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation on military training and consultancy, reinforcing Turkey's support to Syria's interim government.

Syria last month **requested** Turkey's support to strengthen its defense capabilities following sectarian violence in the country that also drew intervention by Israel.

Under the agreement, Turkey would share its "knowledge and experience" and supply military equipment, weapons systems and logistical materials to help strengthen the country's capabilities, Turkish Defense Ministry officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to be quoted by name.

Syria's newly formed interim government has **faced** mounting challenges in **restoring** order and addressing the deep scars left by nearly 14 years of civil conflict, following the ouster of former President Bashar Assad by Islamist-led rebel forces in December.

Most recently, hundreds were killed in **clashes** in the southern province of Sweida between government forces and local Bedouin tribesmen on one side and fighters from the Druze **minority** on the other.

Turkey has been supportive of Syria's new administration, which is formed largely by rebels that Ankara backed during the civil war.

Fidan warned Kurdish fighters to cease actions threatening Syria's stability

Also Wednesday, Turkish Foreign Minister

Hakan Fidan warned Israel and Kurdish fighters to cease actions threatening Syria's stability, accusing them of undermining the country's efforts to reestablish itself after more than a decade of civil war.

Speaking during a joint news conference Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani in Ankara, Fidan accused the U.S.-allied and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, or SDF, of stalling the implementation of an agreement that was reached in March to merge with the Syrian army.

Last week, representatives of Syria's various ethnic and religious groups held a **conference** in the northeastern Syrian city of Hassakeh — which is under the SDF's control — and called for the formation of a decentralized state and the drafting of a new constitution that guarantees religious, cultural and ethnic pluralism.

The Syrian government criticized the meeting, and alleged that among the attendees were some with secessionist ambitions.

It said that as a result it long longer intends to join planned talks with the SDF in Paris that had been agreed upon in late July. No date had yet been set for the Paris talks.