

AROUND THE WORLD

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President of the United Nations General Assembly



TURKEY, QATAR AND AZERBAIJAN

1-12 April 2021



TURKEY - ANKARA



As President of the UN General Assembly, I visited Turkey as part of my first official travel agenda.

I began my trip by paying my respects at Anıtkabir, the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder and first President of the Republic of Turkey.

I was honored to be received by H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Turkey. As President of the General Assembly, I lauded Turkey for its strong support to the United Nations; for its active and visible role in the General Assembly; and for hosting more refugees than any other country. We also discussed regional challenges and how they could be addressed through international cooperation.

I met with H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. We spoke about Turkey's support to the General Assembly and the importance of using dialogue, diplomacy and multilateralism, to find political and peaceful solutions to our world's most pressing problems.

In a meeting with H.E. Mr. Mustafa Şentop, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the discussion focused on the role of parliamentarians in promoting multilateralism and sustainable development.

Addressing the Grand National Assembly, I shared my priorities for the United Nations General Assembly's 75th session with Members of Parliament (MPs).

I met with the Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Turkey, Alvaro Rodriguez, and members of the United Nations Country Team. I was briefed on the United Nations' work in Turkey and shared information about the General Assembly's activities and my priorities for the 75th session.

I also discussed areas of collaboration in a separate meeting with Joshua Setipa, Managing Director for the Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries.

TURKEY - HATAY

On 10 April, I traveled to Turkey's southern province of Hatay to meet with Syrian refugees and visit the United Nations cross-border humanitarian operations.

Soon after arrival, I met with the Governor of Hatay, Mr. Rahmi Doğan. We discussed UN-Turkish cooperation, which is necessary for the provision of aid by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to northwest Syria. The Governor updated me on the situation of the approximately 450,000 Syrian refugees living in Hatay.

I visited the United Nations' transshipment hub in Reyhanlı, where I was briefed on OCHA operations by Mr. Mark Cutts, United Nations Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Syria Crisis, and

Ms. Catherine Alcaraz, Deputy Director of the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM). I also observed the delivery process, including procedures for loading aid shipments onto trucks and monitoring their contents.

I then visited the Cilvegözü Border Gate, where Hatay Deputy Governor Salih Altun described Turkey's role in cross-border humanitarian efforts. I was presented with an oil painting made by a Syrian refugee child.

Following a stop at the Cilvegözü Border Gate, at the Turkish-Syrian border, I traveled to the Bükülmez border post overlooking Atme Tent City, which houses internally displaced Syrians.

I visited the Boynuyöğün Temporary Accommodation Center, a camp for Syrians who have sought refuge in Turkey. I stopped by the camp's orphan center, gave gifts to children, saw a computerized library and spoke with Syrians who were earning income through such activities as growing strawberries, running shops, and making and embroidering clothing.

I then toured the Altnözü Culture and Art Center, where I saw production workshops run by that cooperative, which was established by Syrian and Turkish women.

I returned to New York on 12 April.



QATAR

From 7 to 8 April I visited Qatar. I was received by H.H. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar. In our meeting, we were joined by H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Chief of Amiri Diwan. Some of the topics we discussed included: the importance of multilateralism; the fight against COVID-19; regional developments; vulnerable countries; and climate change.

I attended a working lunch hosted by Dr. Ahmad Hassen Al-Hammadi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We discussed the agenda of the General Assembly's 75th session and common priorities.

I also met with representatives of United Nations entities based in Qatar. I shared information with them about the General Assembly's activities and I received a briefing on their work on the ground.

In addition, in light of the General Assembly's commitment to sport for development and peace, I toured the recently finished Al-Bayt Stadium, which was built for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Lastly, I visited the Museum of Islamic Art.



AZERBAIJAN

From 8 to 9 April, I visited Azerbaijan. As Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement and the country that proposed the General Assembly's special session on COVID-19, Azerbaijan plays an important role on the global stage.

I was received by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. We discussed COVID-19, including vaccines and efforts to counter the pandemic's impacts; regional developments; and the work of the General Assembly. We also exchanged views on how multilateralism can solve global problems.

I met with H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister for Foreign Affairs. The topics of discussion included regional dynamics and the value of multilateralism and diplomacy. We also spoke about the effects of COVID-19 and my priorities for the General Assembly's historic 75th session.

While in Baku, I met with H.E. Ms. Sahiba Gafarova, Chair of the Parliament (Milli Majlis). We spoke about the role that parliamentarians could play in fighting COVID-19, ensuring fair and equitable distribution of vaccines and advancing such themes as sustainable development and gender equality.

In addition, I participated in wreath-laying ceremonies in the Alley of Honor and the Alley of Martyrs.

Before my departure, I met with the United Nations Country Team, led by Resident Coordinator Ghulam M. Isaczai.

