

Turkish fishers venture to waters off West Africa, Oman



File photo shows a fishing vessel sailing through open waters, accessed on Mar. 23, 2025. (Adobe Stock Photo)

By Ihlas News Agency
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Turkish fishing vessels have increasingly turned to international waters, including the coasts of West Africa in the Atlantic and Oman in the Indian Ocean, in search of more productive catches and relief from domestic overfishing pressures.

According to Ahmet Mutlu, President of the Eastern Black Sea Fishermen's Cooperative Union, sending large-scale vessels abroad is seen as a more sustainable alternative to easing the strain on Turkish waters.

"There is good fish productivity in those areas," he noted. "However, our vessels take considerable risks by heading to countries like Mauritania, Senegal, and Oman."





Fishing vessels operate in the Black Sea off the coast of Trabzon, Türkiye, on Mar. 22, 2025. (IHA Photo)

High costs push Turkish fishers abroad

Mutlu highlighted the difficulties Turkish fishermen face in repatriating their earnings from foreign operations, citing the lack of local banking infrastructure in some regions. “There are no Turkish bank branches in those countries. Fishermen have to find their own ways to bring their income back, and that creates ongoing challenges,” he said.

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He emphasized the need for greater government support in establishing stable international markets for Turkish fisheries. “Our overseas market is crucial. We’re trying to find buyers individually, but we need state support and assurance.”

Mutlu also pointed to a broader structural issue, saying, “We need clear regulations about where vessels of certain sizes can fish abroad. Open seas present both opportunities and challenges. Sometimes, boats go months without making a single catch.”

Despite the challenges, Mutlu noted that there is a positive development as large vessels are now managing to cover their costs abroad. This has become increasingly difficult within Türkiye because of rising fuel prices and other operational expenses.

He explained that some boats are equipped with engines of 5,000 to 6,000 horsepower, and with fuel priced at ₺50

(\$1.32) per liter (33.81 fl oz), fishing in Turkish waters is no longer economically feasible.

“Whether there’s state support or not, the industry is being forced to adapt. With better coordination and guidance, this shift could ultimately benefit both the country and its citizens,” he added.

Meanwhile, Turkish fishing vessels continue their operations in African nations such as Mauritania, Oman, and Sierra Leone.

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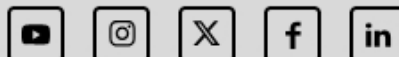
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