

Turkey Affirms Its Claim on Cyprus Oil and Gas

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Turkey will continue exploring for oil and gas in the eastern Mediterranean waters around disputed Cyprus, and “No project can be realised if Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are not involved,” said President Recep Erdogan as quoted by Cypriot [media](#).

“We will continue to defend the rights of Turkish Cypriots with the same dedication,” Erdogan said following a meeting with the head of the Cypriot Turks.

Turkey, which recognizes the northern Turkish Cypriot government and doesn't have diplomatic relations with the internationally recognized government of EU member Cyprus, claims that part of the Cyprus offshore area is under the jurisdiction of Turkish Cypriots or Turkey, and they are entitled to part of the potential oil and gas resources in the area. Turkey doesn't recognize the agreements that Cyprus has signed with other countries in the Mediterranean over the exclusive maritime zones either.

Last month, tensions between Turkey and Greece regarding the Cyprus drilling rights spiked again when Greece's newly elected government [said](#) Turkey undermined the security of the eastern Mediterranean with its drilling operations off the Cypriot shores.

“The illegal actions of Turkey, which defy international law are placing the security of the region at risk. As such, they are absolutely condemnable,” Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias said, adding “We discussed this flagrant violation of the sovereignty and the sovereign rights of the Republic of Cyprus perpetrated by Turkey.”

A string of natural gas discoveries in the waters around Cyprus have turned the divided island into one of the new hot spots for gas, along with Egypt and Israel. Just recently, the island [greenlit](#) a consortium involving Eni and Total to drill for gas in a new part of its exclusive economic zone.

Turkey's strong position on the issue of oil and gas suggests that internal tensions in Cyprus will continue and the newly found gas wealth will not help their resolution.

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