
GREECE AND TURKEY CLOSER TO ARMED CONFLICT, SAY EXPERTS

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06.12.2019

Aljazeera (6 December 2019)

Turkey is threatening to send a drilling ship to waters claimed - and defended - by Greece.

Greece and Turkey have come closer to armed conflict after Turkey's surprise delineation of an Exclusive Economic Zone with Libya, experts tell Al Jazeera.

The agreement, signed on November 27 and unveiled on Thursday, maps out a corridor of water stretching across the eastern Mediterranean between the coasts of Turkey and Libya, cutting across a swath that is also claimed by EU member Greece.

EEZs allow countries exclusive rights to exploit natural resources including mineral wealth.

Turkish energy minister Fatih Donmez has announced that, once the agreement is ratified by both sides, Turkish drillships will begin to search there for oil and gas.

Although the Hellenic Navy neither confirms nor denies it, two experts tell Al Jazeera that Greece has dispatched naval forces to the disputed area southeast of Crete.

"If a Turkish drillship does show up, our ships would take action against it, and that could lead to an armed confrontation, because these ships are accompanied by naval vessels. And of course that could ultimately lead to war," says a veteran senior diplomat on condition of anonymity.

Read more at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/greece-turkey-closer-armed-conflict-experts-191205214345751.html>

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