The Visa Crisis in Context:
A Look at People-to-People Ties Between the U.S. and Turkey

On October 8, 2017, the U.S. Embassy in Ankara issued a statement declaring the immediate suspension of non-immigrant visa services at its embassy and consulates in Turkey.

In response, the Turkish government suspended non-immigrant visa services for U.S. nationals at its embassy and consulates in the U.S. In addition, it suspended the issuance of visas to U.S. nationals through its e-visa processing system, as well as visa issuance upon arrival at international airports in Turkey.

This mutual suspension of visa services has triggered an unprecedented crisis in U.S.-Turkey relations. Its impact falls squarely upon the ordinary individuals of each country who may wish to travel between the U.S. and Turkey for the purposes of business, academics, or tourism.

While the governments in Washington and Ankara carry out discussions and negotiations to allow for the reinstatement of visa services, the ongoing suspension has the potential to damage people-to-people ties, which are as vital to the U.S.-Turkey relationship as government-to-government and military-to-military ties.

This factsheet presents a look at the state of the people-to-people relationship between the U.S. and Turkey in recent years.

Travel Between the U.S. and Turkey

NUMBER OF NON-IMMIGRANT VISAS TO THE U.S. ISSUED TO TURKISH NATIONALS

THE VISA CRISIS AT A GLANCE

American and Turkish citizens with valid visas that have already been issued are not affected. [1]

Turkish citizens may apply for visas at U.S. embassies outside of Turkey. [1]

There is some evidence to suggest that Americans flying from a non-U.S. location (but not transit passengers) can obtain visas upon arrival in Turkey. [2]

NUMBER OF U.S. CITIZENS WHO VISITED TURKEY

BY MONTH (2017)

Source: The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey

NUMBER OF TURKISH CITIZENS WHO VISITED THE UNITED STATES

BY YEAR

Source: The Turkish Statistical Institute

BY YEAR

Source: The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey
Academic Ties

NUMBER OF AMERICAN & TURKISH STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD IN TURKEY AND THE U.S.

AMERICAN STUDENTS ENROLLED IN TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

*Includes students enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs as well as students undergoing vocational training. Does not include study abroad or exchange students.

Turkish students studying in the U.S.

American students studying abroad in Turkey

In 2016, Turkey was the 13TH leading place of origin for international students studying in the U.S. [1]

Turkish students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contribute approximately $400 MILLION to the U.S. economy each year. [1]

Approximately 6,000 Turkish students visit the U.S. each year as part of the U.S.’ Summer Work and Travel program. [2]

Sources: [1] The Institute of International Education
Economic Ties

**OVER 1,400**
American firms operate in Turkey. [1]

**MORE THAN -60-**
U.S. companies maintain a regional headquarters in Turkey. [1]

Turkey needs overseas financing amounting to more than **27%** of its GDP to roll over existing loans. [2]

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**TURKISH TRADE IN GOODS WITH THE U.S.**

![Graph showing bilateral trade between Turkey and the U.S.](source: dogrulukpayi.com)

**U.S.-TURKEY FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT**

![Graph showing foreign direct investment between Turkey and the U.S.](source: export.gov & SelectUSA)

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**Turkish Heritage Organization (THO)** is a young, independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that promotes discussion and dialogue around Turkey’s role in the international community and issues of importance in the U.S.-Turkey bilateral relationship.

Founded by a group of Turkish-Americans with backgrounds in community leadership and run by a staff with demonstrated interest in and commitment to Turkish-American relations, THO strongly believes that any successful bilateral relationship rests on cooperation and constructive discussion between the people of both countries.

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