



# Aegean Sea

## Why in News?

Recently, Turkish President warned Greece to demilitarize islands in the Aegean Sea.

## What is the Dispute?

- **Turkey's Stand:**
  - Turkey says **Greece has been building a military presence in violation of treaties** that guarantee the unarmed status of the Aegean islands.
    - It argues the islands were ceded to Greece on the condition they remained demilitarised.
- **Greece Stand:**
  - Greece maintains **Turkey has deliberately misinterpreted the treaties** and says it has legal grounds to defend itself including a **long-standing threat of war** if Greece extended its territorial waters.
  - Greek-Turkish differences are not presently about land, but water.
    - They **currently each have six nautical miles (11km) of territorial water** in the Aegean.
    - The **[UN Convention on the International Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#)**, concluded in 1982 and ratified by 158 countries, says states may claim up to 12 miles (about 20km).
- **Related Treaty:**
  - Greece absorbed the islands of Limnos, Samothrace, Lesvos, Samos, Chios and Ikaria from the **[Ottoman Empire](#)** in the Balkan Wars of 1912-13.
    - It was officially awarded sovereignty over them in the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923.
  - Another treaty **drawn up in London in 1914** had made Greek possession of the islands conditional on their demilitarisation.
    - According to Turkey, the **Lausanne Treaty** makes reference to the 1914 treaty, it implies the same conditionality.
  - Greece rejects that interpretation.

## What are the Key Highlights about the Aegean Sea?

- Aegean Sea an arm of the Mediterranean Sea, located between the **Greek peninsula on the west and Asia Minor on the east.**
- The Aegean is connected through the **straits of the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus to the [Black Sea](#)**, while the **island of Crete** can be taken as marking its boundary on the south.

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### UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2019)

	Sea	Bordering Country
1.	Adriatic Sea	Albania
2.	Black Sea	Croatia
3.	Caspian Sea	Kazakhstan
4.	Mediterranean Sea	Morocco
5.	Red Sea	Syria

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The Adriatic Sea is a part of the Mediterranean Sea positioned between the eastern coastline of Italy, and countries of the Balkan Peninsula, from Slovenia, through Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and to **Albania**. Hence, pair 1 is correctly matched.
- The **Black Sea** is an inland sea located between far southeastern Europe and the far western edges of the continent of Asia and the country of Turkey. It is bordered by Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia. Hence, pair 2 is not correctly matched.
- The **Caspian Sea** is an enclosed body of water between Asia and Europe. It is bordered by Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Russia. Hence, pair 3 is correctly matched.
- There are 21 countries which border the **Mediterranean Sea**. These are Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and **Morocco**.
- Morocco's Mediterranean coast represents the westernmost edge of the Northern African coast. The coastline features the Strait of Gibraltar that marks the link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Hence, pair 4 is correctly matched.
- There are six countries (Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti) bordering the Red Sea. Hence, pair 5 is not correctly matched. Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

**Q. Mediterranean Sea is a border of which of the following countries? (2017)**

1. Jordan
2. Iraq
3. Lebanon
4. Syria

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
 (b) 2 and 3 only  
 (c) 3 and 4 only  
 (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

**Ans: (c)**

**Exp:**

- The following countries have a coastline on the Mediterranean Sea:
  - Northern shore (from west to east): Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey.
- Eastern shore (from north to south): Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt. Hence, 3 and 4 are correct.
- Southern shore (from west to east): Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt.
- Island nations: Malta, Cyprus. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

**Source: TH**