

# Erdogan threatens Turkish military intervention against Israel

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President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said in his hometown Rize on Sunday that Turkey could intervene militarily against Israel to “protect the Palestinians”.

“We should be very strong, so that Israel cannot do this stuff to Palestine. Just like we entered Karabakh, just like we entered Libya, we can do similar to them. There is no reason not to do it. We must be strong to take these steps.”

Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz responded on X: “Erdoğan is following in the footsteps of Saddam Hussein and threatening to attack Israel. He should remember what happened there and how it ended.” Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was executed in 2006 after the US invasion of Iraq.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry responded to the Saddam Hussein analogy with a Hitler analogy: “Just as the end of the genocidal Hitler came, so too will be the end of the genocidal Netanyahu. Just as the genocidal Nazis were held accountable, those who seek to destroy the Palestinians will also be held accountable. Humanity will stand with the Palestinians. You will not be able to destroy the Palestinians”.

The dangerous escalation between the Israeli and Turkish bourgeoisies, two reactionary allies of US-NATO imperialism, is a warning that the US-NATO-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza could lead to a Middle East-wide war. As the US uses the Gaza genocide as a springboard to escalate a regional war against Iran and its allies, Israel is stepping up preparations for a counter-offensive in Lebanon.

Erdogan’s statement follows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s speech to the US Congress on July 24 and China’s hosting of an agreement between Palestinian organisations.

In his statement on Netanyahu’s visit to Washington

on Saturday, Erdoğan targeted both the US and Israel, saying: “The other day, we all watched those disgraceful scenes in the US House of Representatives. Frankly speaking, we were ashamed of what we have seen there in the name of humanity... Rolling out the red carpet for someone like Netanyahu, going even further and applauding his lies until their palms swell, is a major abdication of reason for America.”

Last week, 14 Palestinian organisations, including Hamas and Fatah, met in Beijing and signed the ‘Beijing Declaration’. According to the agreement, in which Ankara played no role, all the organisations will be united under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), headed by Mahmoud Abbas, and a temporary government of national reconciliation will be formed.

Palestinian Authority President Abbas was invited to Turkey to coincide with Netanyahu’s visit to the US. Erdoğan responded to Abbas’ refusal to accept this invitation by saying, “Mr Abbas, who did not come although we invited him, should first apologise to us”.

In Turkey, which has NATO’s second largest army and hosts numerous US-NATO bases, the Erdoğan government’s response to the Gaza genocide has been marked by hypocrisy. The government’s first reaction after October 7 was one of caution and restraint. It called for a ceasefire and invited the Israeli state and Hamas to the table.

The events of October 7 have undermined the process of normalisation with Israel that Turkey has been pursuing in recent years, based on interests in the natural gas resources of the eastern Mediterranean. Ankara also fears that it could be drawn into a war against Iran, which would damage the interests of the Turkish bourgeoisie, because of US imperialism’s drive to dominate the Middle East.

The public demand to stop trade with Israel was persistently rejected and ignored by the government until May. In the midst of the genocide in Gaza, the government maintained diplomatic and economic relations with Israel for a long time and approved the expansion of NATO, which supports the genocide, by accepting Sweden as a member. In Turkey, where the majority of the population has anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist sentiments, this was a factor in the massive defeat of Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the elections on March 31.

Although Erdoğan has cut trade with Israel and toughened his rhetoric in the face of a backlash, US-NATO bases in Turkey continue to support Israel. Moreover, Turkey continues to intercede for Azerbaijan's critical oil shipments to Israel.

Erdoğan's threat of military intervention against Israel comes at a time of growing social opposition to the cost of living and impoverishment at home. With official annual inflation above 70 percent as of July, the Erdoğan government is intensifying austerity measures. It has refused to raise the minimum wage, the salary of about half of all workers. According to a survey by Asal Research, 64.6 percent of respondents said the "cost of living" was the most important problem in Turkey.

Nevertheless, Erdoğan's threat to intervene in Israel, as he did in Libya and Nagorno-Karabakh, should not be seen as bluster. Last year, Azerbaijan organised a military operation in Armenian-controlled Nagorno-Karabakh. This operation, carried out with the command and armament support of Turkey, resulted in Azerbaijan taking full control of the region.

Turkey supported NATO's imperialist intervention in Libya in 2011 and contributed to it by opening its bases in Izmir and Incirlik. It then provided political and military support to the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA).

In 2019, Turkey and the GNA signed agreements on military assistance and the demarcation of maritime borders. The memorandum signed between Ankara and the Libyan GNA lays claim to vast stretches of the eastern Mediterranean as an exclusive economic zone (EEZ), including waters off Cyprus, the Greek island of Crete and Egypt, along with offshore reserves of oil and natural gas whose worth is estimated in the hundreds of billions of dollars. The memorandum pitted Turkey

against Israel and Greece for control of energy reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean.

This is not the first time that Israel and Turkey have been on the brink of military conflict. In 2010, Israel's attack on the Mavi Marmara ship carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza, which killed nine Turkish and one US citizen, brought relations between the two countries to a breaking point.

The way to stop the Israeli genocide in Gaza and its escalation into a Middle East wide war is to unite the working class in a socialist anti-war movement to take power across the Middle East and internationally against imperialism and its regional proxies.



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