

President Erdogan: “Turkey has Every Right to Conduct Military Operations in Syria”, to Protect Itself against Terrorists

By [RT](#)

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Turkey has the right to carry out military operations not only in Syria, but in any other country, which is hosting terror groups that threaten the Turkish state, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said.

“Turkey has every right to conduct operations in Syria and the places where terror organizations are nested with regards to the struggle against the threats that Turkey faces,” Erdogan was cited as saying by the Hurriyet newspaper.

[#Turkey](#) has the right to conduct operations in [#Syria](#), elsewhere to combat terror: Erdoğan <https://t.co/6R2AdeEWPY> pic.twitter.com/vrKiTnrywr

— Hürriyet Daily News (@HDNER) [February 21, 2016](#)

Ankara’s stance has “absolutely nothing to do with the sovereignty rights of the states that can’t take control of their territorial integrity,” the president insisted.

“On the contrary, this has to do with the will Turkey shows to protect its sovereignty rights,” he added.

The Turkish president’s used an unexpected platform to make his hawkish remarks. On Saturday, he was visiting an event celebrating the inclusion of Turkey’s southeastern province of Gaziantep on the list of UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network in the gastronomy category.

Erdogan warned that his government will treat “attitudes to prevent our country’s right [to self-defense] directly as an initiative against Turkey’s entity – no matter where it comes from.

“No one can restrict Turkey’s right to self-defense in the face of terror acts that have targeted Turkey; they cannot prevent [Turkey] from using it,” he said.

The Turkish forces have been shelling Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) forces, which Ankara views as a terrorist organization, as well as government troops on Syrian territory since mid-February.

The bombings of YPG targets, the military wing of the Democratic Union Party (PYD),

continue despite Turkey's ally, the US, considering the Kurdish fighters an important partner in fighting Islamic State (IS, Daesh, formerly ISIS/ISIL).

There were also reports of dozens of Turkish military vehicles crossing into Kurdish northern Syria, with servicemen digging trenches in the area.

In December, Ankara also deployed 150 soldiers backed by artillery and around 25 tanks to northern Iraq, without consent from the government in Baghdad.

"Turkey will use its right to expand its rules of engagement beyond [responding to] actual attacks against it and to encompass all terror threats, including PYD and Daesh, in particular," Erdogan said on Saturday as cited by the Anadolu news agency.

Twenty-eight people, mainly Turkish military, were killed and 61 others injured in a suicide bombing in Ankara on Wednesday.

Despite the Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (TAK) militant group claiming responsibility for the attack, Turkey says the YPG was also involved.

In an attempt to protect itself, Turkey will treat anyone, who opposes it as a "terrorist and treat them accordingly," the president said.

"I especially want this to be known this way," he added.

Erdogan also slammed countries that criticized Ankara for their incursion into Iraq and Syria, calling them "disingenuous" due to "preaching only patience and resoluteness" to Turkey, but acting in a completely different manner when they are attacked themselves.

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