

Turkey's Erdogan calls Israel a terror state, criticizes the West

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Ankara, November 17 (RHC)-- Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called Israel a “terror state”, stepping up his condemnation of the Israeli assault on the besieged Gaza Strip ahead of a sensitive visit to Germany. Erdogan said that Israel’s military campaign against the Palestinian armed group Hamas included “the most treacherous attacks in human history” with “unlimited” support from the West.

He called for Israeli leaders to be tried for war crimes at the International Court of Justice in The Hague and repeated his view – and Turkey’s position – that Hamas is not a “terrorist organisation” but a political party that won the last Palestinian legislative elections held in 2006. “I say clearly that Israel is a terror state,” Erdogan told members of his Justice and Development Party (AK Party) in parliament.

“While we curse the Israeli administration, we do not forget those who openly support these massacres and those who go out of their way to legitimise them,” he said, pointing to the United States and other Western allies of Israel. “We are faced with a genocide,” Erdogan added.

The Turkish president called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to announce whether Israel has nuclear weapons and added that Netanyahu would soon be a “goner” from his post. Ankara would take steps to ensure Israeli settlers in occupied Palestinian territories are recognised as “terrorists,” he said.

Turkey this month recalled its ambassador to Israel and broke off official contacts with Netanyahu, suspending recent attempts by the two countries to repair their rocky relations.

Israel has also said it is “re-evaluating” relations with Ankara after calling back its diplomatic staff from Turkey and other countries in the region as a security precaution. Erdogan made his comments two days before a planned meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who has been forced to defend his decision to receive the Turkish leader.

Germany has backed Israel, and Scholz said he is opposed to an “immediate ceasefire” in Gaza. “I don’t think the calls for an immediate ceasefire or long pause – which would amount to the same thing – are right,” Scholz said on Sunday.

“That would mean ultimately that Israel leaves Hamas the possibility of recovering and obtaining new missiles,” he added, echoing the position of the US government and calling instead for “humanitarian pauses.”

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