

'Are you with us or with terrorists?' Erdogan lashes out at NATO allies for failure to back Turkey's Syria op

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Turkey's President Recep Erdogan is enraged that NATO members are not supporting Ankara's incursion into neighboring Syria, to target local Kurdish militias, arguing that in doing so they are siding with terrorists.

Ankara has been subjected to diplomatic and economic pressure by fellow NATO members, including Germany, France, and the UK, following its decision to launch a military operation in northeastern Syria last week. An arms sales embargo and other measures are on the table over what Turkey touts as a legitimate counterterrorist campaign.

Erdogan on Monday criticized a lack of support from nations that are supposed to be allies under NATO. *"According to Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which side should they take? They need to stand by us,"* he told reporters, referring to the cornerstone of the agreement that says a military attack on one member is an attack on all of them.

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Erdogan said some people in Turkey thought the mistreatment was due to the fact that their nation is the only Muslim-majority NATO ally. He chose to believe that European leaders were simply misinformed about what Ankara was doing, the president said. *"I've seen that they, unfortunately, do not know many of the facts and are under the pressure of very serious disinformation,"* he said.

Turkey's Operation Spring of Peace targets Syrian Kurdish militias, which in Ankara's eyes are nothing but an extension of its domestic Kurdish guerrillas. Supporters of the Kurds say they played a key part in defeating jihadist forces in the northeastern part of the country, with the US providing air and artillery support.

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