

Erdo?an calls Israeli state “terrorist,” maintains flow of Turkish military supplies to Israel

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As Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan ratchets up his rhetoric against Israel and the Turkish media writes stories about Turkey’s firm stance, new revelations are emerging that trade with Israel is continuing apace.

On Wednesday, at a Justice and Development Party (AKP) Parliamentary Group Meeting, Erdo?an said: “I am calling on Netanyahu from here. Do you have atomic bomb or not?... Israel, you have atomic bomb, nuclear bomb and you are threatening with it. We know this and your end is approaching. It does not matter what you have, you are a goner.”

“I say clearly that Israel is a terrorist state,” Erdo?an said, pledging to charge Israeli officials with genocide before the Hague Court of Justice.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s spokesperson to the Arab world, Ofir Gendelman, quoted Netenyahu’s response on X/Twitter: “P.M.Netanyahu: There are forces that support the terrorists. And one of them is Turkish President Erdogan, who calls Israel a terrorist state, but actually supports the terror state of Hamas. He has himself bombed Turkish villages. We’re not going to take any lectures from him.”

In the same speech, Erdo?an also criticised his NATO allies: “Those who do not speak out against Israel’s crimes against humanity are just as much accomplices in these crimes as the perpetrators. The blood of kids killed in Gaza sticks as a stain of shame to the foreheads of those who provide arms, ammunition and intelligence support to the Israeli administration... yet, none of those from the European Union or the U.S., who always talk about human rights and freedoms, can come forward and utter one single word...”

He added, “Those who allow the unscrupulous to burn the Holy Quran under the pretext of freedom of thought detain, put under arrest, and resort to every method to

silence conscientious people who speak out against the massacre in Gaza.”

The government’s conflict with its NATO and Israeli allies over genocide in Gaza reveals the Turkish bourgeoisie’s impossible dilemma. It is virtually impossible for the Turkish government to join the other NATO powers in supporting a genocide in Gaza and waging the war Washington is planning with Iran. On the other hand, it has the closest ties with imperialism, and has for decades asserted its foreign policy interests through NATO.

The Turkish government’s Gaza dilemma is reflected in its continued high volume of trade with Israel while sending humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.

Erdo?an said that so far 10 planeloads of material had been sent to Egypt for delivery to Gaza, and a ship carrying 666 tonnes of aid had been sent to the region.

However, journalist Metin Cihan, using data from Marinetraffic, has listed the ships that have sailed from Turkey to Israel since 7 October. Cihan wrote on Twitter: “#StopShipmentsToIsrael calls are not working. I just checked, 8 more ships left just yesterday. This brings the total to 259 since the attacks began... Israel is being supplied with ships full of logistics every day.”

Turkey’s exports to Israel amount to around \$6 billion. The biggest item in this figure is steel, which is critical to the arms and defence industries. There is also cooperation in the energy sector, including pipelines and oil pipelines. According to the Turkish Exporters Assembly, Turkey is the third-largest exporter to Israel after China and the United States.

On the other hand, the bourgeois opposition parties are implicated in the government’s hypocrisy, remaining silent on Turkey’s continued trade with Israel amid the genocide.

In one unusual statement, Sabri Tekir, deputy leader of the Islamist Felicity Party, was forced to criticise the government. Tekir said: “Shipments are still being sent from our ports to Israel every day. These shipments include gunpowder and steel. These are all materials used in the production of weapons. There is also fuel oil, there is also food. Whatever you are looking for. So much so that Turkey is the third largest exporter to Israel.”

Criticising the government’s symbolic boycott campaign, Tekir added: “Citizens are boycotting. Some state institutions are encouraging the boycott. It is a good initiative. [But] They [the government] are multiplying their trade volume... We want the government to show even a thousandth of the sensitivity that our housewives show when shopping, not to buy their [Israeli] products.”

The government’s ostensible boycott mainly reflects its fear of an explosion of public anger at strong trade links with Israel amid the genocide, including with mass political strikes.

The Turkish government’s hypocrisy is shared by most of the states of the corrupt Arab bourgeoisie. On the sidelines of the Extraordinary Joint Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League, statesmen met in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to discuss the Palestinian-Israeli crisis.

At the Arab League’s preparatory meeting, a proposal to impose a comprehensive embargo on Israel, similar to that imposed after the Six Day War in 1967, was rejected. The proposals, which included embargoes on articles like oil, the exclusion of Israeli aircraft from Arab airspace, the non-use of US bases and the freezing of all diplomatic and economic relations, were rejected by the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Bahrain.

Iranian President Ibrahim Reisi, who has called for an oil embargo from mid-October, presented a 10-point proposal at the Joint Summit. His proposals—like supporting Egypt in breaking the blockade of Gaza, cutting political and economic ties with Israel, declaring the Israeli army a terrorist organisation, setting up an international court to try Israeli and US leaders, and arming the people of Gaza—were rejected.

The Summit’s final resolution condemned Israel at length and appealed to the international community, while defending calls for an ethnically based “two-state solution” of the Palestinian question, which Israel has consistently rejected. The summit called the pro-imperialist Palestine Authority led by Mahmoud Abbas, which is hated by the Palestinian masses, “the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.”

Erdo?an will hold talks in Germany today. He is expected to meet with President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Olaf Scholz. It has been reported that Israel’s attacks on Gaza will be discussed during the talks.

Erdo?an’s statements that Hamas is not a terrorist organisation, and his criticisms of the hypocrisy of the Western states led to calls in Germany for the government to cancel the visit. The statement of Sevim Da?delen, a former MP of the Left Party and now a member of the “Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht–For Reason and Justice” (BSW), pointed out the pro-imperialist and pro-Zionist attitude of the pseudo-left. Da?delen called on the German government, saying: “The red carpet should not be rolled out for Erdo?an, who does not see Hamas as a terrorist organisation and questions the existence of Israel.”

Before the talks, Scholz felt obliged to comment on Erdo?an’s previous statements. On 10 November, Erdo?an had said, “those who usurped lands where the Palestinian people had lived for thousands of years, are seeking to build a state, whose history dates back 75 years at the most and whose legitimacy they have themselves made questionable with their own fascist acts.”

On 14 November, Scholz responded with a statement blatantly ignoring the ongoing genocide in Gaza. He declared: “Israel is a democracy and a country that respects human rights and international law and acts accordingly. That is why the accusations against Israel are absurd.”



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