North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Remarks

by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the joint press point with the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
2020-03-09

(As delivered)

President Erdoğan,

It is a pleasure to meet with you here today.

Turkey is an important and valued ally contributing to our shared security in many ways.

We have just discussed the serious security situation in Syria. And the refugee and migrant crisis which this has caused.

The ceasefire in Idlib is holding and we have seen a decrease in violence over the past days.

It is important to build on this to ensure protection of civilians and secure access for humanitarian aid.

Turkey is the ally most affected by the turmoil and violence in Syria.

No other Ally has suffered more from terrorist attacks.

And no other Ally hosts more refugees.

NATO will continue to support Turkey with a range of different measures.

This includes defensive missile systems, helping to protect Turkey against threats from Syria.

We also support Turkey with air and naval presence.

And over the years, NATO has invested more than 5 billion US dollars in military facilities in Turkey.

Including important infrastructure such as naval bases and radar sites.

All of this demonstrates NATO’s strong commitment to Turkey’s security.

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The indiscriminate bombings by the Assad regime and Russia have caused untold human suffering.

These attacks have increased the movement of people towards Turkey, which already hosts close to four million refugees.

We recognise that Turkey is carrying a heavy burden.

But Turkey must play its part in finding a longer term solution to this crisis.

I have followed with great concern the events unfolding at the Turkish – Greek border in recent days.

The issue of migration and refugee flows is a common challenge that requires common solutions.

So I welcome the dialogue between Turkey and the European Union.

And I trust that a way forward can be found.

NATO will continue to play its part.

We are currently deployed in the Aegean Sea to help tackle the refugee and migrant crisis.

Allies are also prepared to continue to support Turkey.

And we are exploring what more we may be able to do.

The President and I also discussed a range of other issues.

Including NATO’s relations with Russia and the Turkish purchase of the S400 air defence system.

As well as the situation in Afghanistan.

NATO remains a platform for discussion between Allies of these and many other issues.

So President Erdogan, this is why I greatly welcome the opportunity to meet with you again today.

So thank you so much.

Source: https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/events/transcripts/2020/03/09/remarks