

Erdogan's Hard Times in Syria, Pressured to Backtrack by Putin

By [South Front](#)

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On November 29, he publicly announced that Turkey had launched its operations in Syria to end the rule of "[the tyrant al-Assad](#)":

The Turkish military launched its operations in Syria to end the rule of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, President [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#) said Nov. 29.

"In my estimation, nearly 1 million people have died in Syria. These deaths are still continuing without exception for children, women and men. Where is the United Nations? What is it doing? Is it in Iraq? No. We preached patience but could not endure in the end and had to enter Syria together with the Free Syrian Army [FSA]," Erdoğan said at the first Inter-Parliamentary Jerusalem Platform Symposium in Istanbul.

"Why did we enter? We do not have an eye on Syrian soil. The issue is to provide lands to their real owners. That is to say we are there for the establishment of justice. We entered there to end the rule of the tyrant al-Assad who terrorizes with state terror. [We didn't enter] for any other reason," the president said.

Nonetheless, on December 1, the Turkish president was pushed to backtrack on Syrian goals, clarifying that "to end the rule of tyrant al-Assad" means "[to combat terrorism](#)":

Turkey's military operation in northern Syria does not target any country or individual, and is aimed only at terrorist groups, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said. He had earlier stated that Turkey was in Syria to "end the rule of the cruel Assad."

"The aim of the Euphrates Shield Operation [in northern Syria] is not any country or person, but only terrorist organizations," Erdoğan said Thursday, as quoted by the Hurriyet Daily News.

"No one should doubt this issue that we have uttered over and over, and no one should comment on it in another fashion or try to derail it," he added.

The shift of Erdoğan's strategy in Syria came after a phone call with Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

Accident? Don't think so.

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