

Erdogan Warns Russia Against Using Missile Defense Systems in Syria

By [Peter Hobson](#)

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Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan makes a speech during his meeting with mukhtars at the Presidential Palace in Ankara, Turkey.

Turkish President Recep Erdogan has refused to apologize for the downing of a Russian warplane on the Turkish-Syrian border and implied that Turkey would respond militarily to Russian actions against its aircraft, while Russia's ambassador to Ankara was called to account for angry protests in Moscow.

"I think if there is a party that needs to apologize, it is not us," Erdogan said in an interview with CNN in Ankara. "Those who violated our airspace are the ones who need to apologize."

"If the same violation occurs today, Turkey has to react the same way," he said.

Turkey says the Russian Su-24 bomber that was shot down on Tuesday violated Turkish airspace and ignored warnings to leave. Russia denies that, and has moved to curtail trade

relations with Turkey and reinforce its military deployment in Syria with powerful S-400 missile defense systems. President Vladimir Putin called the strike a “stab in the back.”

Asked how Turkey would respond if Russian S-400s shot down a Turkish plane that strayed into Syrian territory, Erdogan implied that there would be automatic military response.

“This kind of an incident, which may happen, as you expressed, of course, will further push us to take measures which of course are not discussed, simply are taken,” he told CNN. “Of course it would be an aggression against our rights of sovereignty and it’s the natural right of the state to protect those rights.”

Erdogan also rebuffed claims by Russia following Tuesday's incident that his country was an “accomplice of terrorists” or had ties to the Islamic State, the extremist group that controls a swath of territory in Iraq and Syria and is banned in Russia.

Meanwhile, the RIA Novosti news agency reported that Russia's ambassador to Turkey, Andrei Karlov, was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry on Thursday after angry crowds pelted the Turkish Embassy in Moscow with eggs and rocks. The protests reflected widespread public anger over the downing of the plane, one of whose pilots was killed.

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