

Kremlin 'Strongly' Denies Accusations of Meddling in Turkish Vote

By [AFP](#)

May 12, 2023



Kemal Kilicdaroglu, presidential candidate from the Turkish opposition's six-party alliance speaks during a campaign event. **Alp Eren Kaya / Depo Photos / ABACAPRESS.COM / TASS**

The Kremlin on Friday denied it was meddling in Turkey's presidential election campaign, after Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main rival accused Moscow of spreading "deep fakes" targeting him.

Turkish opposition candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu claimed earlier this week that Russia was behind an online smear campaign against him ahead of the crucial election on Sunday.

"We strongly reject such statements," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"We officially declare: there can be no talk of any interference."

"If someone provided Mr. Kilicdaroglu with such information, they are liars," Peskov said.

He added that Moscow "highly values" its bilateral relations with Ankara.

"Turkey has a very responsible, sovereign and thought-through position on a whole range of regional and global problems that we face," Peskov said.

Russia and Turkey have retained close ties throughout the Ukraine conflict, with Erdogan often acting as a mediator who talks to both Moscow and Kyiv.

Kilicdaroglu's allegations came hours after a third-party candidate dropped out of the race after being targeted by an online smear campaign.

"Dear Russian friends," Kilicdaroglu said on Twitter.

"You are behind the montages, conspiracies, deep fakes and tapes that were exposed in this country yesterday," he said without providing details.

"If you want our friendship after May 15, get your hands off the Turkish state. We are still in favor of cooperation and friendship."

Polls show the secular opposition leader edging ahead of Erdogan in Sunday's presidential ballot.

Original url:

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