

Erdogan Urges Putin Not to Escalate Ukraine War Tensions

By [AFP](#)

August 02, 2023



Putin with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan. **TASS / kremlin.ru**

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urged his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in a call on Wednesday not to further escalate tensions, after Moscow struck facilities vital for grain shipments from Ukraine.

Erdogan was a key player in the now-collapsed deal that allowed for safe passage of Ukraine grain shipments on the Black Sea, and has positioned himself as an intermediary in the conflict.

The Turkish leader said "no steps should be taken that will escalate tensions in the Russia-Ukraine war."

He emphasized the significance of the grain deal that he called a "bridge for peace," the office added.

The accord, brokered by Turkey and the United Nations, allowed Ukraine to export grain via its Black Sea ports, but it ended last month after Moscow withdrew.

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Ukraine said Wednesday that Russia had struck port infrastructure in Ukraine's southern region of Odesa, targeting facilities used to export grain since the collapse of the deal allowing shipments from the Black Sea.

As a result of the attack, a grain elevator, grain silos and warehouses were damaged or destroyed, prosecutors said.

Erdogan told Putin that the long-term inactivation of the grain deal "will not benefit anyone" and that the countries in need would suffer the most, according to the presidency.

Erdogan also said the grain prices that decreased by 23% when the agreement was in force increased by 15% over the last two weeks.

He vowed Turkey would press ahead with "intensive efforts" and diplomacy to re-establish the agreement.

The two leaders also agreed on Putin's visit to Turkey, according to Erdogan's office, but no timetable was given.

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