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Erdogan Tells Putin Cooperation With Russia Key to Resolving Regional Conflicts

By AFP

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AP / TASS

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told Russian President Vladimir Putin that cooperation between their two countries is crucial for resolving regional conflicts, his office said Friday.

"Cooperation between Turkey and Russia is of key importance in resolving regional issues," Erdogan said after discussions that covered the Ukraine war and the situation in Syria.

The two leaders also spoke about security in the Black Sea, with Erdogan pledging that Ankara would take steps to ensure "the safety of commercial navigation," which he said would contribute to broader peace efforts.

The Kremlin confirmed that the talks included "the resumption of the Black Sea initiative for

safe navigation and the removal of obstacles to the export of Russian food and fertilizers."

The initiative, brokered by Turkey and the UN in 2022, was designed to guarantee the safe export of Ukrainian agricultural products via the Black Sea. However, Moscow withdrew from the deal in 2023, accusing the West of failing to lift sanctions it said were hampering its own agricultural and fertilizer exports.

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The call between Erdogan and Putin came a day after European leaders agreed to ramp up sanctions on Russia over its war in Ukraine. The United States has separately pursued its own diplomatic initiative through direct talks with Moscow.

"Turkey is closely following the process initiated to end the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, and is ready to provide all kinds of support, including hosting peace negotiations," Erdogan told Putin.

Turkey, a NATO member, has sought to maintain good relations with both Ukraine and Russia since the 2022 invasion. Ankara has twice hosted talks aimed at ending the war.

Erdogan also said in the Friday phone call with Putin that it was "important for Turkey and Russia to work together to ensure that Syria achieves lasting peace and stability."

Russia was a key backer of Syria's recently deposed leader Bashar al-Assad, offering military support during the country's civil war, while Turkish-backed rebel forces opposed him.

Moscow has since sought to strengthen ties with the new administration in Damascus, in particular, to hold on to its military bases in Syria.

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