

Turkish President Makes Even More Shocking Statements

In an anti-Israel tirade this week, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for thousands of Muslims to ascend the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Erdogan made the remarks at the opening of the Al-Quds Waqf International Forum in Istanbul, saying Turkey will not allow for Muslim prayers to be silenced in Jerusalem.

“Turkey attaches great importance to the justified resistance of the Palestinians and will not yield to Israeli attempts to change the status quo in the Al-Aqsa mosque,” said Erdogan, Turkey’s Daily Saba newspaper reported. “We as Muslims should visit the Al-Aqsa mosque more often, every day that Jerusalem is under occupation is an insult to us.”

Erdogan also criticized Israel for its “Muezzin Bill,” which is meant to limit the volume of Muslim calls to prayer during early morning hours.

“The fact that such an issue is even coming to the agenda is shameful,” Erdogan said. “Why are you afraid of the freedom of faith if you believe in your faith? I am now reminding Israeli administrators: If you believe in your faith, then why are you afraid of the sound of our prayers?”

The Turkish leader called Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians “racist and discriminatory,” and said Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip “has no place in humanity.”

The Israeli government was swift in condemning Erdogan’s comments as “baseless slander.”

“Anyone who systemically violates human rights in their own country, should not preach about morality to the only

democracy in the region,” Israel’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement, adding, “Israel strictly adheres to protecting full freedom of worship for Jews, Muslims and Christians.”

Turkey and Israel last year agreed to normalize diplomatic ties following a six-year rift in their relationship, but Erdogan has a history of anti-Israel and anti-Semitic remarks.

In his comments at the conference in Istanbul, Erdogan also criticized promises by President Donald Trump to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, saying the plan is “extremely wrong” and should be “dropped from the agenda.”

Turkish Ambassador to Israel Kemal Okem was summoned by Israel’s Foreign Ministry to clarify Erdogan’s anti-Israel statements. The ambassador was informed Israel would not remain silent in the face of such rhetoric, reported *The Jerusalem Post*.

“Israel consistently protects total freedom of worship for Jews, Muslims and Christians—and will continue to do so despite the baseless slander launched against it,” the Israeli Foreign Ministry said.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat also slammed Erdogan Tuesday, saying, “The connection of the Jewish people to Jerusalem dates back more than 3,000 years. Jerusalem is and will remain our eternal, united capital forever.”

The mayor invited Erdogan to visit Jerusalem to “see for himself” how the capital city has flourished under Israeli administration.

“We have heard voices which attack Israel for building Jewish life in Jerusalem,” Israeli President Reuven Rivlin said during a meeting with Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby in Jerusalem, referring to Erdogan’s statements. “I must tell these people, for the last 150 years there has been a Jewish majority in Jerusalem. Even under the Ottoman Empire there was

a Jewish majority in Jerusalem.”

The Ottoman Empire took over Jerusalem in 1517, and the British seized control of the holy city 400 years later.

Rivlin added, “Under Israeli sovereignty, we continue to build Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people. There is no doubt Jerusalem is a microcosm of our ability to live together. And we will continue to ensure freedom of religion for all faiths.” {eo}

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