Turkey demands NATO hopefuls 'hand over your terrorists' before it approves membership: report

Turkey blames Kurdish groups for the November 2022 bombing in Istanbul

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday stressed that he will oppose the NATO bids of hopefuls Sweden and Finland unless they deport some 130 "terrorists."

"We said look, so if you don't hand over your terrorists to us, we can't pass it [approval of the NATO application] through the parliament anyway," Erdogan said in comments late on Sunday. "For this to pass the parliament, first of all, you have to hand more than 100, around 130 of these terrorists, to us."

The two Nordic countries applied to join the NATO alliance in May after Russia invaded Ukraine and changed the security apparatus in Europe. Turkey immediately expressed reservations over the applications regarding support for Kurdish militants whom Turkey considers terrorists.

"We are following developments concerning Sweden and Finland, but we are not of a favorable opinion," Erdogan said in response to the official applications. Any nations looking to join the NATO alliance require unanimous support from all 30 member states.

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