

President Erdoğan's UN Speech: Words Without Action

News:

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly, described what is happening in Gaza as “genocide,” emphasized that Israel kills children every day, and called on the international community to take action. Sharing photos from Gaza, President Erdoğan said: “There is no war in Gaza ... This is an occupation, deportation, exile, genocide and life destruction.”

He also reiterated his famous phrase, “The world is bigger than five,” criticizing the structure of the UN, announced that relations with NATO and the United States are strengthening, and that Türkiye will host the NATO Summit in 2026. Other highlights of his speech included emphasis on the environment, artificial intelligence, zero waste, and family.

Comment:

In his speech at the UN General Assembly, President Erdoğan drew attention to many global issues, particularly Palestine. However, from an Islamic perspective, these words remain hollow, detached from concrete action, and remained mere rhetoric, never breaking free from the constraints of the global colonial system.

President Erdoğan's words may have touched consciences, especially regarding Palestine. Yet, from an Islamic point of view, the greatest shortcoming of this speech is that strong words do not translate into real action. While children in Gaza are dying of hunger and the strip has turned into a camp of death and destruction under total blockade, to be the “voice of the oppressed” amounts to nothing more than words.

His criticism of the UN was also superficial. The UN that is being called to “reform” is itself a system established by oppressors. The duty of the Ummah is not to revive this collapsed system but to establish a new world order on an Islamic foundation. Erdoğan's long-repeated phrase, “the world is bigger than five,” appears as a critique of the five-member UN Security Council. While this resonates positively with peoples who despise the global system, the reality is that the United States itself is dissatisfied with the post–World War II system it created and seeks to change it. Thus, Erdoğan's call for reform aligns with America's own interests.

Moreover, President Erdoğan's praise of strengthening ties with NATO signifies humiliation, not honor, for Muslims. Cooperating with an organization that has massacred millions of Muslims from Afghanistan to Iraq, from Syria to Libya, is not a source of pride but a cause for shame.

The “two-state solution” discourse is also a product of a colonialist mindset. In both the Palestinian and Cypriot contexts, this phrase means nothing but recognizing the Jewish presence on Palestinian land and the Greek presence on the island of Cyprus. Yet both are occupiers. The solution lies not in legitimizing and recognizing these occupations but in ending them.

While President Erdoğan's UN speech included striking words and observations, it carries no weight when viewed against Türkiye's actual political stance over the past two years amid the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

The details of Erdoğan's meeting with Trump following his UN speech reveal how, despite Türkiye's immense strategic position and the dynamics of great powers, the country has fallen into a state of vulnerability. Major agreements with the United States—whose full scope has yet to be disclosed—have been made. On the agenda are the construction of civil nuclear facilities in Türkiye, the purchase by Turkish Airlines of hundreds of passenger planes from the US, F-35 and F-16 fighter jets, military equipment, LNG to be transported by American ships, and even the allocation of some of Türkiye's rare earth elements to the US.

Trump's welcoming of President Erdoğan at the door, his application of top-level protocol, pulling out his chair, sitting side by side, holding a private meeting lasting more than two hours, and repeatedly praising him are not without reason. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's words are telling: “All of these other countries, including Türkiye by the way, are begging us to be involved ... The truth of the matter is that we have leaders ... They are calling and saying: Can we be included? Can you bring us in? Can you get me five minutes to shake the President's hand?”

While many world leaders beg for a five-minute handshake with Trump, Erdoğan's two-hour meeting points to enormous concessions made by Türkiye and the new roles it is set to assume in implementing US regional plans!

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