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Reuters

## Turkey's Erdogan calls Israel a "terrorist Sate"

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Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan described Israel on Monday as a "terrorist state" in carrying out its bombardment of Gaza, underlining hostility for Ankara's former ally since relations between them collapsed in 2010.

His comments came after nearly a week of Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel and Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip. An Israeli missile killed at least 11 Palestinian civilians including four children in Gaza on Sunday.

"Those who associate Islam with terrorism close their eyes in the face of mass killing of Muslims, turn their heads from the massacre of children in Gaza," Erdogan told a conference of the Eurasian Islamic Council in Istanbul.

"For this reason, I say that Israel is a terrorist state, and its acts are terrorist acts," he said.

Ties between Israel and Turkey, once Israel's only Muslim ally, crumbled after Israeli marines stormed an aid ship in 2010 to enforce a naval blockade of the Palestinian-run Gaza Strip. Nine Turks were killed in clashes with activists on board.

Ankara expelled Israel's ambassador and froze military cooperation after a U.N. report into the incident released in September last year largely exonerated the Jewish state.

Earlier this month Turkey opened the trial in absentia of four former Israeli military commanders over the 2010 raid.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu is to travel to Gaza on Tuesday with a group of foreign ministers from the Arab League.