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Erdoğan says there is still a 'long way to go' in anti-Gülen fight

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The government has covered significant ground in the fight against the Fethullahist Terror Organization (FETÖ) but there is still a long way to go, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said, vowing further measures against the organization, which is blamed for Turkey's failed coup attempt of July 15.

“We must make this so-called FETÖ terror organization unable to betray our nation again, along with all of its elements. We are waging this struggle in all our institutions. We have covered significant ground so far but there is still a lot of ground to cover,” Erdoğan said during an Eid al-Adha holiday ceremony in Istanbul on Sept. 13.

The president also claimed that the attempted takeover was not the end of what he called a “great plot,” but only one phase.

“Those who participated in the coup attempt are certainly members of the FETÖ terror organization. But we know that there is a greater plot. July 15 was not the finale of this plot; it was just a phase of it,” Erdoğan said, suggesting that this “plot” extended to other Muslim countries around the world.

Erdoğan also likened the actions of FETÖ to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the country's eastern and southeastern regions, where 24 trustees were appointed to mayors' offices to replace the previous mayors removed over alleged PKK links.

“The continuation of [the] Dec. 17-25, 2013, [graft probe] betrayal and the ditch digging actions which the PKK launched in some of our districts in the southeast are the same. The continuation of those actions was [the] July 15 [coup attempt]. Some municipalities directed by the PKK actively took part in the ditch digging actions and the bloody attacks of the terror organization,” Erdoğan said.

He also reiterated that those who were elected mayors but through unlawful acts supported terror would certainly face judicial action.

“Those people who were supporting organizations instead of doing municipal work and using the nation’s facilities and the authority given to them by the public in that direction were actually not mayors. Being elected does not give anyone the right and authority to use facilities in their hands to benefit terror organizations. There is no obstacle in putting the same will forward in other municipalities for both the PKK and FETÖ, especially in metropolitan municipalities,” Erdoğan said, adding the judicial system would prevail over mayors who supported terror organizations instead of providing services and that they would be held accountable for their actions.