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# Turkey Won't Back Sweden's Bid To Join NATO - Why Is Erdogan Against Sweden's Application

## Why In The News?

- NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Said Some Progress Had Been Made During **Talks In Turkey On Sweden's Bid To Join The Western Alliance**. Stoltenberg Made The Comments At A News Conference On The **Eve Of A NATO Defence Ministers Meeting In Brussels**.
- In March, **Turkey Ratified Finland's Bid For Membership** Of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, But Still **Objects To Sweden Joining The Alliance, As Does Hungary**.



## Tracing The Timeline

- **Sweden And Finland** Applied For Membership Together **After Russia's Invasion Of Ukraine Last Year**, Marking A Dramatic Pivot After Decades Of Military Neutrality.
- **Finland Became NATO's 31<sup>st</sup> Member** In April After The Turkish Parliament Ratified Its Request, But **Turkey Has Held Off On Approving Sweden's Bid**.
- NATO Wants To Bring Sweden Into The Fold By The Time The Leaders Of Its Member Nations Meet For A **Summit In Lithuania's Capital, Vilnius**, In July.



## What Erdogan Said

- **President Recep Tayyip Erdogan** Has Rebuffed Growing International Pressure On Turkey To Ratify Sweden's NATO Membership Bid Before The Military Alliance Meets In July.
- **Western Officials Had Hoped Erdogan Would Soften His Position** On The Diplomatically Charged Issue After He Secured A Hard-fought Re-election Last Month.
- **But Erdogan Signaled No Major Shift** In Comments Released By His Office While Turkish And Swedish Officials Were Locked In Last-minute Negotiations In Ankara.



## Why Turkey Is Against Sweden's Bid For NATO?

- Turkey's Government Accuses Sweden **Of Being Too Lenient Towards Groups That Ankara Says Pose A Security Threat**, Including Kurdish Armed Organisations And People Accused Of Associations With A Failed Coup Attempt Against Erdogan's Government In 2016.
- A Series Of Demonstrations In Stockholm, Including **A Protest By An Anti-Islam Activist Who Burned The Quran Outside The Turkish Embassy**, Also Angered Turkish Officials.
- **Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson** Has Said His Government Has Done What It Promised In An Agreement Reached With Turkey Last Year, Which Was Intended To Secure Ankara's Ratification Of Its NATO Membership.



- Erdogan Also Mentioned **Pro-Kurdish And Anti-NATO Rallies** That Took Place In Stockholm While He Was Holding Talks With The Alliance's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, In Istanbul This Month. He Said He Planned To Attend The July Summit In Lithuania Unless "Extraordinary" Circumstances Arise.
- Turkey Cannot Approach Sweden's NATO Bid Positively **While "Terrorists" Were Protesting In Stockholm**, Erdogan Said. Sweden Has Focused On Extraditing Suspects With Links To The **Kurdistan Workers' Party (Pkk)** And Passed An "Anti-terrorism" Law, But Ankara Has Made It Clear Those Actions Are Not Enough.

## Why Turkey Is Crucial?

- **Turkey To Become Member Of NATO In 1952 & Hungary In 1999.** NATO Requires The **Unanimous Approval Of All Existing Members** To Expand, And

Turkey And Hungary Are The Only Countries That Have Not Yet Ratified Sweden's Request To Join.

- White House Said The **United States** Wants Sweden's Approval Quickly. Meanwhile, The Top Republican On The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Said That He **Was Blocking A \$735m Arms Sale To Hungary** Because Its Government Has Refused To Approve Sweden's Bid To Join NATO.



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