

Turkey sees U.S. offer of rewards for information on PKK members positively

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Turkey takes a positive view of a U.S. move to offer rewards for information on three members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the foreign ministry said on Wednesday, adding it expected to see concrete steps in the fight against the PKK.

The United States offered the rewards on Tuesday for information on the three senior members of the PKK.

"We expect this step to be supported with concrete actions that will be carried out in Syria and Iraq regarding the fight against the PKK and its extensions," the ministry said in a statement.

Turkey has been infuriated by U.S. support for the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, which Ankara considers to be an extension of the PKK. The YPG spearheads the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the fight against Islamic State in Syria.

The PKK has fought the Turkish state since 1984.

Presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said Turkey would approach Washington's move with caution and it expected the United States to sever all ties with the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia.

The U.S. reward announcement comes amid an improvement in ties which began after a Turkish court last month released U.S. pastor Andrew Brunson from house arrest.

Last week, the two countries mutually lifted sanctions on government officials imposed in August over the Brunson case. Washington announced this week that Turkey would receive a temporary waiver from reimposed sanctions on Iran.

On Tuesday, President Tayyip Erdogan said talks with the United States regarding state-owned lender Halkbank, which might be facing a possible U.S. fine over allegations of evasion of sanctions on Iran, were on a positive track.

U.S. and Turkish troops last week began joint patrols in Syria's Manbij, which the two sides have agreed to clear of militants. Turkey had previously said the United States was delaying implementation of the plan.

U.S. President Donald Trump and Erdogan are to meet this weekend at a summit in Paris.