

Turkish lawmakers authorise sending troops to fight in Libya

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Ismet Yilmaz, head of the parliament's national defence committee from the ruling AK Party, addresses lawmakers at the Turkish Parliament in Ankara, Turkey, January 2, 2020. REUTERS/Stringer

Ankara: Turkey's parliament has authorised sending troops to Libya to help the UN-supported government in Tripoli battle forces loyal to a rival government.

Turkish lawmakers voted 325-184 at an emergency session on Thursday in favour of allowing a one-year mandate to deploy troops.

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But Ankara says the deployment may be needed for Turkey to safeguard its interests in Libya and in the eastern Mediterranean.

The motion allows the government to decide on the scope, strength and timing of any mission by Turkish troops.

Turkish Vice President Fuat Oktay told state-run Anadolu Agency that Turkey would send "the necessary number (of troops) whenever there is a need."

Egypt condemns Turkey's decision

Egypt strongly condemned on Thursday a vote by Turkey's parliament vote to allow a troop deployment to Libya, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Egypt said any such deployment could "negatively affect the stability of the Mediterranean region" and called on the international community to urgently respond to the move.

Turkey says Trump, Erdogan discussed Libya in phone call

US President Donald Trump discussed the situation in Libya with his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan in a phone call on Thursday, Turkey's presidency said less than an hour after Ankara passed a bill allowing troop deployment to Tripoli. Trump and Erdogan "stressed the importance of diplomacy in resolving regional issues," the Turkish presidency said. The situation in Syria was also addressed on the call, it added.

- AP, Reuters