



Erdogan

Sigmar Gabriel

# Germany slams 'interference' of Erdogan in vote

## Berlin

German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel hit out yesterday against "interference" by Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Germany's elections, after the Turkish leader urged Turks living abroad not to vote for parties of the ruling coalition.

"That is an unprecedented act of interference in the sovereignty of our country," Gabriel told the RedaktionsNetzwerk media group.

"Erdogan's interference in Germany's electoral campaign shows that he wants to incite people in Germany against each other," he said.

Gabriel urged Germans to push back by turning up in strength at the polls and voting for parties that champion democracy.

"Let's show those who want to play us against each other that we will not participate in this evil game," he said.

Erdogan's move also did not go down well with the

Turkish community.

Atila Karaborklu, the co-chairman of Germany's Turkish Community association, accused Erdogan of "seeking to divide German society".

His aim is "to hurt German democracy," charged Karaborklu.

Erdogan on Friday called on Turks living in Germany not to vote for the two parties in Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling grand coalition or the Greens in next month's legislative elections, calling

them "enemies of Turkey".

Upping the stakes in a intensifying row with Berlin, Erdogan said ethnic Turks in Germany should not cast their ballots either for Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Gabriel's Social Democratic Party (SPD), or the Greens.

Tensions have spiralled in recent months between Germany and Turkey, in one of the most significant crises in years between two NATO allies with long-standing historical links. (AFP)

## IS fighters encircled in Syrian desert: monitor



## Beirut

Syrian regime troops have seized more territory from the Islamic State jihadist group in a central desert region, almost entirely surrounding its fighters there, a monitor said Friday.

Backed by Russian warplanes and pro-government militias, the Syrian army has made considerable progress in its months-long offensive to retake the Badiya.

The vast desert region, which stretches from the country's centre to the Iraqi and Jordanian borders, has been held by IS since 2014.

"The regime managed to encircle the area of Okayrbat and the surrounding 44 hamlets, straddling the central provinces of Hama and Homs," said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for

Human Rights.

Syria's official SANA news agency also reported that Okayrbat had been surrounded.

Russia's defence ministry said the Syrian army had taken control of the last supply route for arms, ammunition and equipment in the area.

It said the jihadists were seeking to flee towards their stronghold of Deir Ezzor to the east.

"The Russian air force is continuously conducting reconnaissance drone flights to find and destroy armoured vehicles, pickup trucks with heavy weapons and cars used by the terrorists," it added.

Regime troops have also seized four gas fields in the central desert, the British-based Observatory said.

## S Korea's 'Poop School' wants to change name

## Seoul

A South Korean elementary school whose name means "shit" has decided to adopt a more fragrant moniker, school officials said yesterday.

Many Korean names and words are based on Chinese characters, so when rendered in the Hangul alphabet they can have the same spelling, but multiple meanings.

The unfortunate consequence for the Daeyun Elementary School in Busan is that human faeces are the first thing that come to mind when Koreans hear its name.

"Are you from Poop School?" was a typical taunt students and former pupils have endured for 55 years,



The Daeyun Elementary School in the city of Busan reports said.

They have mounted a campaign to change the name, gathering more than 4,000 signatures since April, a school official who declined to give her name said.

"We want to have a pretty school name," read a banner

put up on the school wall by the students and their parents.

A school committee will choose among three options next week and submit a request to local authorities to change the name, she said, with permission expected to be granted from the spring term

next year.

One of them, Haeparang or sea waves, would flush away the stench of the past, while the other two are geographically based.

Founded in 1963, the school, which has 77 students, was named after a village called Daeyun-ri, a shortening of the nearby Daedonggobyunpo port, or Daedong Warehouse Coast.

The Kyunghyang Sinmun daily said other schools also have embarrassing homographs, including Jungja (sperm), Jungwan (seminal duct), Yadong (pornography) and Mulgun (prick).

None of the four said they were considering changing their names, they said.

## Hundreds dead in South Asia flooding

Heavy monsoon rains have caused landslides and floods across northern India, southern Nepal and Bangladesh in recent days, killing more than 300 people and displacing millions more



Sources: ReliefWeb, wire agencies

Picture: Getty Images

© GRAPHIC NEWS