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### Europe

## NATO deploys Patriot missiles in Turkey

NATO starts deploying Patriot missiles in Turkey to defend against threats from neighbouring Syria.

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Germany approved the sending of two Patriot batteries and 400 soldiers to Turkey as part of a NATO plan [Reuters]

NATO has begun deploying Patriot missiles in Turkey in a bid to protect the country from the threat of war from neighbouring Syria, according to the US military's European Command (EUCOM).

EUCOM said in a statement on Friday that US military personnel and equipment were sent to Incirlik Air Base in southeastern Turkey to support NATO's Patriot battery deployment at Ankara's request.

Up to 400 troops are expected to be transported to Turkey within the week to operate two Patriot batteries supporting NATO's mission there. Additional equipment is scheduled to arrive by sea this month.

"The deployment of six Patriot batteries, including two each from Germany and The Netherlands, is in response to Turkey's request to NATO," EUCOM said in the statement issued from its offices in the southwestern German city of Stuttgart.

"The forces will augment Turkey's air defence capabilities and contribute to the de-escalation of the crisis along the

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Alliance's border," it added.

The statement said that the timeline of the deployment would be determined by the contributing nations in coordination with Turkey and NATO.

EUCOM deputy commander Charles Martoglio said the Patriot batteries would fall under NATO command "when set-up is complete and the systems are operational in the next several weeks".

"The deployment will be defensive only and will not support a no-fly zone or any offensive operation," he added.

Germany, The Netherlands and the United States have agreed to supply the ground-to-air missile batteries, which Turkey requested after repeated cross-border shelling from Syria. A recent attack on the border has killed five civilians.

NATO-member Turkey, a one-time Damascus ally, has turned into one of its most vocal opponents over the 21-month civil war in Syria, which according to monitors, has killed an estimated 60,000 people.

Source: Agencies

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| People  | Country  | City  | Organisation   |
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