

Russia Confirms Rescue of Second Su-24 Pilot, Deployment of Air Defense Systems in Syria

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Russia on Wednesday confirmed the rescue of the second pilot of the downed Russian Su-24 warplane, while air defense missile systems would be deployed in Syria.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu confirmed the rescue of the second pilot by Russian and Syrian forces.

The 12-hour rescue mission ended successfully with all participants "taking great risks all night long," Tass news agency quoted Shoigu as saying.

Two pilots ejected from the downed Su-24 on Tuesday. A senior Russian military official said Tuesday evening that preliminary reports showed one pilot was killed by ground fire in Syria.

The Russian Defense Ministry also announced that new-generation S-400 Triumf anti-aircraft missile systems would be deployed in the Hmeimim airbase on the orders of President Vladimir Putin.

Shoigu said Russia's Moskva missile cruiser is ready at new combat duty position near Syria's Latakia.

"We have taken the high priority measures ... Moskva is ready to destroy any air target of potential danger to our aircraft," Shoigu said.

All further operations of Russian aircraft in Syria would be conducted only under the cover of fighter jets, while all military contacts with Turkey would be frozen, Shoigu stressed.

A Russian Su-24 warplane was shot down by Turkish air force on Tuesday as Ankara claimed the aircraft violated Turkish airspace.

Turkey said two of its F-16 fighters took action after many warnings against the Su-24 while Russia has claimed that its bomber posed no threat to Turkey and had not intruded Turkey's airspace.

Putin criticized the action as "stab in the back from accomplices of terrorists" and warned of serious consequences.

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