

Russia to Establish Naval Base in Syria in the Eastern Mediterranean

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

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The decision announced in early June to set up a Russian military base in Syria on the Eastern Mediterranean bears a direct relationship to the war on Lebanon and Israeli ambitions to control militarily the entire Eastern Mediterranean coastline.

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Russia has begun works in the Syrian port of Tartus seeking to build a full-scale naval base for the ships of the Black Sea Fleet, currently based in Ukraine's Sevastopol, the Kommersant newspaper reported on Friday, quoting unnamed sources in the Defense Ministry and the General Staff of the Russian Navy.

The paper noted that this is the first time Russia is setting up a military base outside the CIS since the fall of the USSR and that the base will allow Moscow to pursue its own line in the Middle East. The setting up of a Russian military base

Russia has also started work in the port of Latakia in Syria, the newspaper said. The base in Tartus and the new mooring in Latakia will be able to serve the needs of the Black Sea Fleet and possibly the North Sea Fleet as well.

The newspaper quoted its sources as saying that in the nearest future the Russian Navy will form a squadron headed by the Moskva missile cruiser which will permanently operate in the Mediterranean, taking part in joint exercises with NATO forces.

The sources said that the new base would allow Russia to strengthen its positions in the Middle East and also enhance Syrian security.

However, the Russian Defense Ministry has refuted the report. Russia is not building a military base in Syria, spokesman for the Ministry Colonel Vyacheslav Sedov was quoted by RIA Novosti as saying.

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