

‘Turkish Jets Gave Us No Warning before Shooting’ - Rescued Pilot of Downed Russian SU-24

By [RT](#)

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The navigator of the Russian Su-24 shot down by a Turkish fighter jet on Tuesday insists that his plane did not cross into Turkey's airspace, and says he was given no visual or radio warning before being fired at.

"It's impossible that we violated their airspace even for a second," Konstantin Murakhtin told RT and other Russian media.

"We were flying at an altitude of 6,000 meters in completely clear weather, and I had total control of our flight path throughout.

As well as denying Ankara's assertions that the plane was in Turkey's airspace, Murakhtin, who says he knows the mission area *"like the back of my hand,"* also refuted Turkish officials' claims that the pilots were warned repeatedly. "

In actual fact, there were no warnings at all. Neither through the radio, nor visually, so we did not at any point adjust our course. You need to understand the difference in speed between a tactical bomber like a Su-24, and that of the F16. If they wanted to warn us, they could have sat on our wing," said Murakhtin, who is currently recuperating at Russia's airbase in Latakia, northern Syria. *"As it was, the missile hit the back of our plane out of nowhere. We didn't even have time to make an evasive maneuver."* [READ MORE: Leaked Ankara UN letter claims Su-24's 'air space violation' lasted 17 seconds](#) As the plane was hit and went down in Syria, the two pilots ejected. Captain Sergey Rumyantsev was killed, with a rebel Turkmen brigade claiming they shot him to death while he was still parachuting. Murakhtin was extracted in a 12-hour joint operation by Russian and Syrian special forces, in which a Russian marine died.

FSA video claims Russian-made helicopter hit with US-made TOW missile near Su-24 crash site <https://t.co/sODf4BFK1b> <https://t.co/UjTKmN8xAj>

— RT (@RT_com) [November 24, 2015](#)

The 39-year-old airman, who won the Top Navigator award at Russia's biggest military flying competition last year, says he will ask to return to front-line service as soon as he is declared fit.

"I must 'pay back' the debt for my captain," said Murakhtin.

The incident has led to Russia accusing NATO member Turkey of a *"planned provocation,"* as military co-operation has been suspended between the two states. Both sides, however, have vowed to avoid further escalation, with a meeting planned between foreign ministers.

Turkey has been supporting anti-government forces in Syria since a rebellion broke out against Bashar Assad in 2011. Russia has staunchly backed Assad, and has been conducting an airstrike campaign at his request since September.

Both Russia and Turkey have condemned Islamic State, but have also accused each other of enabling its progress, with Vladimir Putin calling the downing of the Russian jet *"a stab in the back by the accomplices of terrorism."*

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