

Turkish Plane Reported Shot Down in Syrian Airspace

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

On June 22, [Reuters](#) headlined “Turkish jet downed by Syria air defenses: report,” saying:

According to Lebanon’s Al-Manar television, “Syrian air defenses shot down a Turkish military aircraft, quoting Syrian security sources.”

Reportedly it was an F-4 Phantom fighter bomber. First introduced in 1960, McDonnell Aircraft produced it. It was used extensively during the Vietnam war. More advanced aircraft replaced it long ago.

A pilot and navigator were on board.

Turkey regularly patrols airspace close to Syria’s border.

[Al-Manar](#) headlined “Crisis Meeting in Turkey after Losing Contact with Military Jet near Syria,” saying:

Turkey’s military said it “lost radio contact with one of its aircraft on the Mediterranean near neighboring Syria.”

At 7:30 GMT, the plane left Malatya airbase. At 8:58GMT, communication was lost “in the southwest of the Hatay province bordering Syria....”

Search and rescue efforts began. It’s unconfirmed officially if the plane crashed or was shot down. Its pilot and navigator were reported unharmed.

“Malatya governor Ulvi Saran told the Anatolia news agency that it was a F-4 plane with two pilots onboard....”

In response to the incident, AFP said Turkey convened a crisis meeting.

Other reports are circulating. [Russia Today](#) (RT.com) said Syria apologized to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan for downing its aircraft.

Turkey's [Hurriyet](#) daily reported the same story. It headlined "Syria apologizes for taking down Turkish warplane: Turkish PM," saying:

"Eyewitnesses in the northern Syrian town of Latakia told BBC Arabic that Syrian air defences shot down an unidentified aircraft near the town of Ras al-Baseet."

An "official Turkish source" said Syrian forces shot it down.

Early Friday, the plane crashed into Syrian waters. A missile reportedly destroyed it. Hurriyet said Turkish helicopters rescued two crew members.

Other reports suggest they were taken captive.

"Unconfirmed reports (said) Syrian defense forces had been shooting at two foreign planes."

Local correspondent Ihab Sultan told Russia Today (RT.com):

"Witnesses spotted two jets flying in from Turkish territory. One of the planes went down in Syria's territorial waters, while the other one made off."

Mossad-connected [DEBKAF](#) provocatively said "Syrian anti air defenses shot the plane down in an ambush calculated to retaliate for the defection of the Syrian Air Force pilot Col. Hassan Maray al-Hamadeh to Jordan a day earlier with his MiG-21 warplane."

"Officials in Damascus are certain his defection was organized by US and Turkish intelligence."

At 16:00 local time, two Turkish military aircraft entered Syrian airspace over Latakia. They were "lying low in threatening formation." One was struck and destroyed. The other escaped.

Dam Press and other Syrian news agencies "speculated that the intruders were either Turkish or Israeli."

"Since Thursday, Syria's entire air fleet has been grounded while its spy agencies screen flight personnel for more potential defectors."

Turkey's [Today's Zaman](#) headlined "Report: Syria shoots down Turkish warplane."

It published an earlier Reuters report.

Turkey's a NATO member. It could invoke NATO Charter Articles 4 or 5.

Article 4 calls for members to "consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of any" is threatened.

Article 5 considers an armed attack (real or otherwise) against one or more members, an attack against all, and calls for collective self-defense.

Whether the incident was accidental or provocative remains to be determined. Given ongoing crisis conditions and tense Turkish/Syrian relations, events going forward bear watching.

Wars begin for less.

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