
Russia to start withdrawal from Syria Live updates

14/03/2016



- 14 March 2016

19:16 GMT

The Syrian opposition has welcomed the announcement that Russia is to withdraw its forces from Syria, saying the move is likely to put pressure on Syrian authorities and give the peace talks in Geneva a positive impulse.

"If there is seriousness in implementing the withdrawal, it will give the talks a positive push," Salim al-Muslat, spokesman for the rebel High Negotiations Committee, has said.

- **19:14 GMT**

Vladimir Putin's press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, has said that the details and timing of the withdrawal of Russian Aerospace Defense Forces from Syria will be worked out by the Ministry of Defense based on requirements to ensure the safety of remaining military personnel.

"This is a framework decision of the president, the details will be specified by the Ministry of Defence," he said.

Peskov has also noted, that the bases and personnel that remain in Syria will provide coordination with foreign partners. *"In monitoring the ceasefire we continue to coordinate actions with the American side. Tartus and Khmeimim will keep on performing these functions".*

- **18:51 GMT**

"Our bases – the naval base in Tartus and the airbase at the Khmeimim airfield – will operate in a routine

mode. They are to be safely protected from the land, from the sea and from air," Vladimir Putin has said, adding that those Russia servicemen who will stay in Syria will be engaged in monitoring the ceasefire regime. "A part of our military group has been traditionally deployed in Syria for many years and now it will be tasked with fulfilling the very important job of monitoring the ceasefire regime and creating conditions for the peace process."

- **18:40 GMT**

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- **18:30 GMT**

The US State Department has not yet assessed reports of Moscow's decision to withdraw Russia's air group from Syria, according to the department's spokesperson John Kirby. *"I did not see that report before coming out here today. So, I am going to have to reserve comment until we have a chance to take a look at it and make an assessment"*, Kirby said.

- **18:21 GMT**

Syria and Russia have agreed to reduce the presence of the Russian Aerospace Defense Forces in the Middle Eastern country after it helped the Syrian army make military gains, according to a statement made by the Syrian president, stating the move will be in line with *"the continuation of the cessation of hostilities and in accordance with the situation on the ground."*

Russia has pledged to continue its support for Syria in *"combating terrorism,"* the same statement declared.

- **18:20 GMT**

In a phone conversation between Vladimir Putin and Syria's President Bashar Assad at Moscow's initiative,

the two leaders have agreed that the actions of Russia's Air Force in Syria have allowed them to "profoundly reverse the situation" in connection to fighting terrorists in the region, having "disorganized militants' infrastructure and inflicted fundamental damage upon them."

- **18:17 GMT**

"I ask the Russian Foreign Ministry to intensify Russia's participation in organizing the peace process to solve the Syrian problem," Putin said during his meeting with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Lavrov has assured the president that the operations of the Russian Aerospace Defense Forces had created the conditions for the political process in Syria. He noted that the talks on Syria's future had resumed in Geneva earlier on Monday, adding that "the work is not easy, it is yet to be understood how all these groups [that take part in the talks] could gather at the same table together. But the process has got underway, and it is in our common interests to make it sustainable and irreversible."

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- **18:15 GMT**

"I consider the objectives that have been set for the Defense Ministry to be generally accomplished," Putin has said during a meeting with Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. "That is why I order to start withdrawal of the main part of our military group from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic starting from tomorrow."

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