

# *Russia Says Over 50 Warplanes, Helicopters Involved in Syria Airstrikes*

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Moscow, October 2 (RHC)-- Russia's Defense Ministry says over 50 Russian warplanes and helicopters are involved in the country's airstrikes against militants in Syria. Igor Konashenkov, the spokesman for the Russian Defense Ministry, said on Thursday that the Russian Air Force fleet in Syria includes the latest Sukhoi Su-24M and Sukhoi Su-25 ground attack aircraft.

Konashenkov told reporters that in the past 24 hours Russia has conducted 12 airstrikes against terrorists in Syria. "A terrorist headquarters and an ammunition depot were destroyed near Idlib, as were a fortified three-level command center near Hama," he said, adding: "A direct bomb hit also completely destroyed a workshop north of Homs that produced explosives and ammunition."

The official further noted that the Russian forces conducted the airstrikes in coordination with Syrian forces. "All the airstrikes are being conducted in coordination with the Syrian Army command. The Syrian Defense Ministry has deployed an operative group at the Hmaimim airbase," located near Bassel al-Assad international airport south of Lattakia, Konashenkov said.

Russia's airstrikes against the militants in Syria kicked off on Wednesday, shortly after the upper house of the Russian parliament gave President Vladimir Putin the mandate to use military force in Syria.

Commenting on the raids, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow would be open to having "standing channels of communication" with the U.S.-led coalition, which has been attacking purported positions of Daesh in Syria and Iraq for more than a year now.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy and a terror campaign by Daesh for over four years.

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