

Russia Says Terrorists Killed in Su-24 Search Operation Area



Moscow, November 27 (RHC)-- Russia says it has killed terrorists in the search area of the downed Russian Su-24 jet inside Syrian territory near the border with Turkey after one of the two pilots of the ill-fated aircraft was saved.

The Russian Defense Ministry confirmed on Thursday that forces from the Syrian military were also involved in the operation. General-Major Igor Konashenkov, the ministry's spokesman, told a media briefing that "the moment our pilot was in safety the area was heavily bombed by the Russian Air Force and shelled by Syrian government forces artillery," adding that terrorists and other "mysterious groups" were killed in the assault.

Konashenkov added that Russia was denied access by Turkey to any material related to the downing of the Russian jet by a Turkish F-16 fighter jet. Turkey released an audio of alleged warnings, but the surviving Russian co-pilot denies the authenticity of the recordings.

Konashenkov further said "today, in accordance with the decision taken earlier, all channels of cooperation between the Russian Defense Ministry and the armed forces of Turkey were suspended."

The developments come two days after the Turkish Air Force shot down a Russian Sukhoi Su-24M Fencer they had accused of having violated Turkish airspace on Tuesday, an allegation Moscow has

denied. One of the pilots was killed by militants in Syria after ejecting from the targeted jet and another was rescued by the Syrian army.

A member of the Russian Naval Infantry, involved in a search-and-rescue operations to retrieve the two pilots, was also killed after his Mi-8 helicopter made an emergency landing when it came under militant fire in northwestern Syria.

The Russian military has started an aerial campaign against terrorists in Syria since late September upon a request from Damascus.

The S-400 missile defense systems have been deployed to the Russian Air Force base in the western port city of Latakia, confirmed Konashenkov, noting that “now we are going to ensure the safety of our planes fighting against Daesh militants and other terror groups by taking more reliable measures.”

The system is the most advanced one owned by Russia in the field of air defense. The missile system, an upgrade of the S-300 family, is capable of intercepting and destroying airborne targets such as aircraft and ballistic and cruise missiles at distances of up to 400 kilometers.

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