Report Says Russia Fired at Israeli Jets in Syria

Tel Aviv, April 23 (RHC)-- Israeli warplanes have repeatedly violated Syrian airspace and bombed targets inside the country which is fighting foreign-backed militants. Russian forces in Syria have fired at least twice on Israeli military aircraft, according to Israel's top-selling newspaper.

The Yedioth Ahronoth daily on Friday gave no dates or locations for the incidents nor any indication Israeli planes were hit. Separately, Israel's Channel 10 TV said a Russian warplane approached an Israeli warplane off the Mediterranean coast of Syria last week but that there was no contact between them.

Israel has repeatedly violated Syrian airspace and bombed targets inside the country which is fighting foreign-backed militants. Israeli media claimed that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu raised the issue with Russian President Vladimir Putin during his visit to Moscow on Thursday.

But the Kremlin on Friday denied the two had discussed the alleged incidents involving Russian forces in Syria and Israeli military aircraft. Israeli media had claimed that Tel Aviv was quick to set up an operational hotline with Moscow designed to avoid trading fire with Russian forces.

According to the newspaper Yedioth, the reported Russian fire on Israeli planes was first raised with Putin by Israeli President Reuven Rivlin, who visited Moscow on March 15.

At the time, Putin responded that he was unaware of the incidents, Yedioth said.

This is not the first report of alleged confrontations between Israeli and Russian warplanes in Syria. Last month, the Israeli daily Haaretz said King Abdullah II of Jordan had claimed that Jordanian jets helped Israeli warplanes confront Russian aircraft on the southern Syrian border at an unspecified time.

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