

U.S. Shoots Down Syrian Air Force Fighter Jet Over Raqqah



Damascus, June 19 (RHC)-- The United States has shot down a Syrian Air Force fighter jet over Syria's northern province of Raqqah, in what is being called a "massive violation of international law and de facto military aggression."

The Syrian General Command of the Army and Armed Forces announced in a statement that the military aircraft was on a combat mission against Daesh terrorists, noting that the pilot of the jet had gone missing after the "flagrant aggression."

Meanwhile, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov has strongly condemned the United States for shooting down the Syrian jet, saying that this is "a continuation of America's line to disregard the norms of international law."

On Sunday, the Pentagon admitted it shot down a Syrian air force SU-22 jet that bombed U.S.-backed rebels near Tabqah, in Raqqa province. The U.S.-led coalition said it had informed the Russians it was targeting the aircraft, but Moscow denied it had received the notice.

In response, the Russian Defense Ministry has terminated its use of a military hotline for avoiding incidents in Syrian airspace, stating that it will now track all coalition flights west of the Euphrates River.

The downing of the aircraft is the latest indication the U.S. is expanding its military role in Syria. The U.S. military recently attacked Syrian government troops who it said entered an exclusion zone near Iraq where the U.S. military is training Syrian rebels.

On Monday, Russia announced that U.S. aircraft operating in Syria “will be ... treated as targets.” The statement said: “Any flying objects, including planes and drones of the international coalition, discovered west of the Euphrates River will be tracked as aerial targets by Russia's air defenses on and above ground.”

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