

# *Russian Airstrikes in Syria Carried Out in Support of Free Syrian Army Battling Terrorists*

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Moscow, December 15 (RHC)-- Russian jets carry out up to 40 airstrikes a day in support of Free Syrian Army (FSA) militants who are battling Daesh in Syria's Raqqah, Aleppo, Homs and Hama provinces, says Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces General Valery Gerasimov.

On Monday, Gerasimov said that his country's task force in Syria also supplies the FSA with "weapons, munitions and other material supplies." He explained that Russia is "promoting the [Syrian] government troops and opposition groups joining efforts to defeat the terrorists."

Gerasimov also stated that some 5,000 FSA members are currently aiding the Syrian army in the fight against Takfiri terrorists, adding that the number is constantly growing. The Russian task force, which only targets terrorist infrastructure, has not so far received support from the countries Moscow deems as its partners, he said, adding: "On the contrary, we received a stab in the back with a Turkish Air Force F-16 fighter jet violating Syrian airspace and downing our Su-24."

The FSA has rejected Gerasimov's comments, saying that on the contrary the Russian air force is still launching attacks on its positions. But militants from a recently-formed alliance of Syrian armed groups,

including those who identify themselves as FSA, have confirmed the Russian official's remarks, saying that they benefited indirectly from Russia's actions.

An FSA commander, General Hossam Awak, announced that they are prepared to share intelligence on Takfiri positions with Russia. "We have precise intelligence, documents, maps, and we can share them with the Russians so that their strikes on Daesh are more effective," Awak said.

"We really want to cooperate with the Russians in the fight against Daesh on condition that their airstrikes hit solely Daesh targets," he added. Moscow launched its air raids against Daesh and other terrorist groups in Syria on September 30, upon a request from the Syrian government.

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