

Government Sending Planes to Syria to Deliver Aid and Pick Up Citizens

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Emergency Situations Ministry will send two planes to Syria on Tuesday to deliver 46 tons of humanitarian aid and pick up citizens who want to leave the war-torn country, a ministry spokeswoman said Monday.

Russia has been one of the biggest foreign protectors of Syrian President Bashar Assad, but in recent months Moscow has given signs it may be preparing for his possible defeat.

The planes carrying tents, power generators, furniture and 11 tons of food will fly to the port city of Latakia in northwestern Syria, Emergency Situations Ministry spokeswoman Irina Rossius said, according to Itar-Tass.

She said that in addition to Russian nationals, the planes would pick up citizens from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

"Citizens of Russia, as well as CIS countries, who want to fly out of that country, will be able to leave Syria on the planes," she said.

Moscow has blocked three UN Security Council resolutions that would have increased pressure on Damascus to end the violence that has seen nearly 70,000 people killed in an uprising that is almost two years old.

In January, the Kremlin sent two flights to evacuate 77 citizens from Syria, a signal that Russia may be preparing for the possibility of Assad's fall.

Russia says that Assad's departure must not be a precondition for negotiations to settle the conflict.

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