

# FSB Worried About Russian Fighters in Syria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

May 16, 2013

**The  Moscow Times**

BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — The Federal Security Service estimates that about 200 Russian citizens are fighting alongside Syrian rebels and fears that they could carry out militant attacks once they return.

The Russian government has sold arms to Syrian President Bashar Assad and offered him crucial diplomatic support during a conflict that has killed more than 80,000 people, but militants from the North Caucasus are fighting on the other side.

Once the war in Syria is over, foreign fighters returning home "will naturally pose a particular threat to their native countries," FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov said.

He was speaking Wednesday at a meeting of security agencies of former Soviet republics in Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek, as Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met his U.S. counterpart in Sweden to talk about a peace conference for Syria where Washington supports

the opposition.

Bortnikov said that, in addition to the Syrian conflict, the war in Afghanistan and plans for the withdrawal of most foreign combat troops from there by the end of 2014 were a draw for militants.

Several citizens of Kyrgyzstan have joined the rebels in Syria, the head of the Kyrgyz security service, Beishenbai Zhunusov, told reporters. He declined to elaborate.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/05/16/fsb-worried-about-russian-fighters-in-syria-a24048>