

# Putin Says Russia's Policy on Syria Ensures Harmony

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President Vladimir Putin says his government's policy on the Syrian conflict is aimed at ensuring eventual harmony among all of the country's ethnic groups.

Russia has blocked proposed UN sanctions against Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime and acknowledged last month that it had contracted to supply advanced S-300 air-defense missiles to Syria.

But Putin said Tuesday that "we're not advocates for the current government and the current president."

Instead, he told reporters during a visit to the Kremlin-funded TV channel RT, Russia is concerned for the future of all ethnic and religious groups in Syria.

"Not the other way around — kick everybody out and then plunge the whole country into chaos," Putin said.

Syria has been a long-time ally for Russia, which has a naval base in the country. But Russia has shown signs of dismay over Assad's intransigence.

*(AP)*

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