

More Than 100 Russians Evacuated From Syria as Threat of Strike Looms

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The IL-76 Plane that Evacuated Russians from Syria, Operated by the Emergency Situations Ministry.

More than 100 Russians have been evacuated from Syria over the last two days as the threat of a Western military operation hangs over the war torn country.

A group of 27 Russians, mostly women and children, was picked up on Wednesday by an IL-62 aircraft at the Mediterranean port of Latakia, an Emergency Situations Ministry representative said.

On Tuesday, a plane carrying 20 tons of humanitarian aid arrived in Syria and brought 75 Russians back to Moscow. Fourteen citizens from former Soviet republics were also aboard the plane that landed at Domodedovo Airport at about 11 p.m., Interfax reported.

The Russian Navy said Wednesday that it would not participate in the evacuation of citizens from Syria.

The U.S., the U.K. and France could attack selected targets in Syria starting at the end of the week, according to international media reports. The attacks are likely to consist of cruise missile strikes and could last from two to three days.

The U.S. and its European allies could conduct their first air raids against Syria on Thursday, The Associated Press reported Tuesday.

President Barack Obama is planning an operation to stop the Syrian regime using chemical weapons, an unnamed U.S. government official told the New York Times.

The operation would stop short of toppling President Bashar Assad, the official said.

The strikes against targets in Syria would be conducted mainly from NATO warships in the Mediterranean Sea as well as air bases in Cyprus and Turkey.

A final decision is expected after separate meetings of the British and French security councils on Wednesday.

An emergency session of the British parliament is expected Wednesday to vote in favor of a military operation, the Financial Times said.

The NATO is also planning to discuss the situation in Syria at a meeting on Wednesday, Interfax reported.

U.S. officials say they have plenty of evidence, including information from satellites and intelligence sources, that points to the Syrian authorities' responsibility for the suspected chemical attacks that killed several hundred people in Damascus last week, The Wall Street Journal said.

The U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said Tuesday that America's Armed Forces were "ready to act" and are waiting for the president's order to attack Syria.

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