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Russia Deploys Anti-Aircraft Missiles in Syria

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Russia began air strikes against militant groups in Syria on Sept. 30.

Russia has deployed anti-aircraft missiles in Syria to protect itself from air strikes, the head of Russia's air force, Viktor Bondarev, told the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper Thursday.

Bondarev did not specify the exact types of air defense systems deployed.

Russia began air strikes against militant groups in Syria on Sept. 30. Moscow claims it is targeting terrorist groups, though Western analysts say Moscow's real aim is to defend its ally, Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Preparations were being made for the deployment of Russia's advanced air-defense systems on Sept. 11, Reuters reported, citing Russian and U.S. unidentified sources. The sources told Reuters that the system being transported to Syria was the newest version of the SA-22.

Russia's main airbase in Syria is located outside the coastal city of Latakia. It has about 50 aircraft including Su-24M and Su-34 bombers, low-flying ground attack Su-25CM jets and

multi-role Su-30CM fighters, as well as Mi-24 attack helicopters and multi-role Mi-8 helicopters.

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