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Russian Military Helicopter Downed in Syria, Marine Contractor Killed

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On Nov. 24 a Russian Mi-8 helicopter was shot down while engaging in a search and rescue operation after the downing of a Su-24 jet near the Syrian border.

The Russian Mi-8 military helicopter involved in a rescue operation in Syria — in the area where the downed Su-24 fighter-bomber landed — was shot down from territory controlled by terrorist groups, the Interfax news agency reported, citing officials from Russia's Armed Forces General Staff.

"A rescue operation involving two Mi-8 helicopters was launched in order to evacuate Russian pilots [of the downed Su-24]. In the course of the operation one of them was shot by small-arms weapons and damaged. It had to perform an emergency landing," General Staff Lieutenant-General Sergei Rudskoi was cited by Interfax as saying.

The incident resulted in the death of one marine contractor, Rudskoi added. The military involved in the operation, including the Mi-8 crew, have been evacuated from the site and transferred to Russia's Hmeymim airbase in the Latakia province.

According to the Lieutenant-General, an operation aimed at destroying militarized gangs that include more than 1,000 fighters from Russia's North Caucasus is carried out in the area by Syrian government troops.

Other countries involved in the Syrian military operation have not identified these areas as opposition-controlled, Rudskoi pointed out. “These areas are known as territories controlled by the most radical groups,” he said.

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