

Britain Accuses Russia of Exacerbating Syrian Civil War

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond (R) sits next to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry.

British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond said on Monday that Russia's actions in Syria have undermined international efforts to end the Syrian civil war, Reuters reported Tuesday.

"It's a source of constant grief to me that everything we are doing is being undermined by the Russians," Hammond was quoted as saying by Reuters.

Russian forces have been carrying out air strikes in Syria since Sep. 30. Russia says it targets only Islamic State and other terrorist groups in Syria, while Western countries accuse the Kremlin of also bombing moderate rebels and civilians.

"Since the Russian intervention in Syria, the dribble of people who were perhaps going back from these camps to Syria has stopped dead," Hammond said, adding that there are new flows of refugees because of Russia's actions, particularly in southern Syria, Reuters reported.

Hammond also said Russia's intervention in Syria has strengthened the position of Islamic State, a terrorist group banned in Russia.

"Less than 30 percent of Russian strikes are against Daesh targets," Hammond said. "Their intervention is strengthening Daesh on the ground — doing the very opposite of what they claim to be wanting to achieve."

Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman Maria Zharova, commenting on the allegations, called Hammond's statement "dangerous disinformation" in an interview to the Govorit Moskva radio station, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

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