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Putin and Assad Discuss Syrian Cease-fire Deal

By The Moscow Times

February 24, 2016



Syrian President Bashar Assad

Russian President Vladimir Putin held a phone conversation with Syrian President Bashar Assad on Wednesday to discuss the cessation of hostilities in Syria from Feb. 27, the RBC news agency reported, citing Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

The presidents "discussed various aspects of the Syrian crisis in light of the Russian-U.S. agreement on the partial cease-fire," the Kremlin's press service said in the statement.

"Bashar Assad considered the agreement's terms to be a big step toward political regulation of the crisis," the statement said.

On Sunday, Russia and the United States agreed to halt military operations in Syria from Feb. 27, though the deal would not concern Russia's fight with Islamic State and other terrorist groups, according to the Russian president's announcement, RBC reported.

The joint work on the Syrian problem may improve relations between Russia and the United States and "increase the level of trust," Peskov said.

According to Peskov, the partial cease-fire was prepared during close bilateral talks between Russia and the United States, but Assad might have "his own view of the regulation."

"The range of opinions is huge. It demands meticulous work," Peskov said, RBC reported.

Islamic State is a terrorist group banned in Russia.

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