

Russia Launches Criminal Investigation Into Death of Pilot in Syria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russia's Investigative Committee has launched a criminal investigation into the killing of a Russian pilot in Syria despite a previous military investigation claiming there are no grounds to do so, the Kommersant newspaper reported Wednesday.

The decision not to launch a criminal investigation made by the Russian military last year was based on a failure to identify suspects responsible for the killing of Lieutenant Colonel Oleg Peshkov after his plane was shot down over Syria.

The Russian military did not have any military investigators on the ground at the time of the event, meaning they were forced to carry out preliminary investigations themselves.

Turkish warlord Alparslan Celik was made a prime suspect after he released a statement claiming responsibility for the pilot's death. However, the Russian military was unable to detain or interrogate the Turkish citizen.

Turkish police subsequently arrested Alparslan Celik on weapons charges as he was returning from Syria on March 30.

According to a senior source known as 'b', the Investigative Committee launched an inquiry in accordance with Article 12 of the Criminal Code. This allows authorities to investigate foreign citizens suspected of committing crimes against "the interests of Russia" and its citizens abroad.

Within the framework of the case, the Russian Prosecutor General may direct Turkey's Prosecutor General to investigate Celik. If Celik's involvement in the pilot's death is confirmed, the Prosecutor General can also request his criminal prosecution in Turkey, Kommersant reported.

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