

Kremlin Rejects Working Group to Mend Russia-Turkey Relations

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin (L) and Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan attend a news conference at the Presidential Palace in Ankara.

The Kremlin has rejected the creation of a dedicated working group aimed at normalizing relations between Russia and Turkey, the Interfax news agency reported Monday.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu proposed the idea during a press conference in Antalya earlier on Monday. His statement was seen as a response to speech made by Russian President Vladimir Putin last week in Greece, saying that the Russian government was waiting for Ankara to take “concrete action to resolve the situation.”

"Putin said that he wanted us to take steps to resume our relationship. We also want our relationship to normalize," said Cavusoglu. "We are proposing a joint working group to help us take those steps. We will be able to find a common path to normalization. It's not an unsolvable problem."

The Kremlin quickly dismissed the idea, maintaining that the solution was not a joint endeavor, but dependent on Turkish actions.

“No working group can solve these problems. It is something that only the Turkish government can bring about,” said presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov. “He [President Vladimir Putin] has made our position clear enough.”

Tensions between Russia and Turkey have increased dramatically after a Russian fighter-jet was downed by Turkish forces in November 2015. Moscow maintains that the jet was in Syrian air space, while Ankara says that the plane did not respond to several warnings after it encroached on Turkish territory.

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