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Turkey Backtracks on Paying Compensation For Downed Russian Jet

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Turkey's Prime Minister Binali Yildirim

Ankara will not pay compensation for shooting down a Russian Su-24 bomber in November last year, the Reuters news agency reported Tuesday, citing Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim.

The statement comes several hours after reports of Yildirim on Turkish television saying that the Ankara was ready to pay compensation for the incident, the RIA Novosti news outlet reported.

Moscow received a letter from Turkish President Recep Erdogan on Monday in which he apologized for the downing of the Russian aircraft on the country's border with Syria. He expressed his condolences to the pilot's family and said that Ankara was "ready to take any initiative in order to relieve the pain and the damage inflicted."

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that Erdogan's apology was "a serious step towards the normalization of bilateral relations," but said that mending ties with Turkey

would require time, the Interfax news agency reported.

The Russian Su-24 bomber was downed by a Turkish jet on Nov. 24 last year.

The incident led to a sharp deterioration in relations between the two countries and was followed by a package of economic sanctions imposed on Ankara by the Kremlin. Russia has repeatedly stressed that any ties between the two countries can only be reached after the Kremlin had received an apology and an agreement to pay compensation.

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