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Turkey Ready to Pay Compensation for Downed Russian Warplane

By The Moscow Times

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The Turkish government has agreed to pay compensation for downing a Russian Su-24 bomber in November last year, the RIA Novosti news agency reported Tuesday.

Ankara sent Russian President Vladimir Putin a letter on Monday apologizing for the incident.

Speaking on Turkish television, the country's prime minister Binali Yildirim said that the two countries wanted to improve ties. "The content of the letter is clear. We expressed our regret and will pay compensation [for the downed aircraft], if necessary. Both countries want to normalize relations. I think things are getting better," he said, RIA Novosti reported.

The amount of compensation has not been disclosed.

In the letter, Turkish President Recep Erdogan expressed his condolences to the family of the deceased Russian pilot and apologized for the incident. The letter also said that Turkey was "ready to to take any initiative in order to relieve the pain and the damage inflicted."

The apology comes seven months after Russian Su-24 bomber was shot down by the Turkish air force near the country's border with Syria. The incident led to a dramatic deterioration in relations between the two countries, with the Kremlin claiming that no dialogue would possible until the Turkish authorities apologized and offered compensation.

Other measures taken against Turkey by the Kremlin included a ban on the sale of package tours to the country and an embargo on a wide range of goods.

Both countries “agreed immediately take all necessary measures in order to improve the ties,” after the apology was issued, Turkish presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin said Monday, the Reuters news agency reported.

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