

Russia Flies First Bombing Raids Out of Iran

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Iskander Ziyatdinov / Wikicommons

Russian aircraft have flown their first bombing raid from an Iranian airbase under a cooperation deal between Moscow and Tehran, Russia's Defense Ministry announced Tuesday.

A number of Tu-22M3 long range bombers took off from the Hamadan air base in western Iran and attacked Islamic State and al-Nusra Front targets in Syria, the Ministry said in a statement on its website.

The bombing raid destroyed five major weapon depots, training compounds and three command posts, the statement claimed.

Use of the Hamadan airstrip cuts flying time for Russian jets by more than half, Russian media reported. Bombers had previously conducted airstrikes on Syria from southern Russia.

Flying from Iran puts Russian bombers closer to their targets in Syria. Normally, the long-

range Tu-22M3s will fly from a base some 3000 kilometers away, in southern Russia. The Iranian Hamadan air base puts the aircraft within 700 kilometers from their target, theoretically increasing their maximum payload and sortie rate.

Reports claim that Russia has requested permission from Iran and Iraq to use their airspace to launch cruise missile attacks on Syria from Russia across the Caspian Sea. Russia is also planning to upgrade its [Khmeimim Airbase](#) in western Syria to support heavy bombers.

Russia entered the Syrian conflict in September last year in support of Syrian President Bashar Assad. Russian air support is currently helping Syrian government forces to make gains against insurgents.

The Islamic State and the al-Nusra Front are terrorist organizations banned in Russia.

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