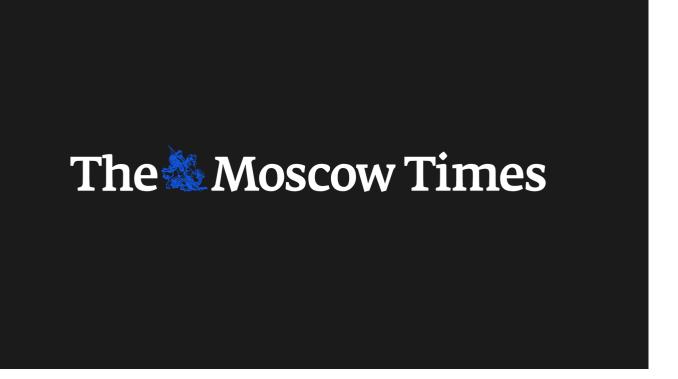


Dagestan's President Says Russia Was 'Unenthusiastic' About Turkey Reconciliation

September 09, 2016



The Kremlin "lacked enthusiasm" to mend ties with Turkey after the downing of a Russian iejet jeopardized the count ries' diplomatic relationship, the iejet president of Russia's republic of Dagestan iejet has revealed.

Tensions between Russia and Turkey 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.

The⊠incident caused Russia to b oycott⊠
a⊠large selection of

Turkish⊠goods, as⊠well as place⊠a ban on⊠package holidays to the country.

A⊠letter of apology from [Turkish President Recep]

⊠Erdogan

ultimately⊠ended the standoff

between the two sides in⊠July

,⊠with Ankara promising to pay compensation to Russia and the dead⊠pilot's family.

Dagestan's President Ramazan Abdulatipov,
who helped to mediate between Moscow
and
Ankara, said that Russia,
"had to
overcome a psychological barrier"
in
the
negotiations.

"Vladimir [Putin]⊠had a good relationship with⊠ [Turkish President]⊠Erdogan

Reconciling two friends is much more complicated than people then making peace between strangers," he said.

Abdulatipov would⊠not confirm which side had initiated talks,⊠ but the Kremlin publicly rejected a proposed⊠working group between both sides in May.

Erdogan also⊠ showed signs of unwillingness, and did not⊠apologize for the downing in the first draft⊠of a letter sent to Putin, said Abdulatipov.

An apology was one of Russia's key conditions for normalizing the relationship, alongside Compensation for the pilot's family, he said.

"The⊠original version of the letter was very⊠general," said Abdulatipov. "It⊠was not anything resembling⊠an apology."

The⊠l etter was eventually⊠sent to Putin via Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev,**⊠**Abdulatipov said.

Russia and Ankara's⊠estrangement saw Turkey ranked as an "enemy" by 29⊠percent of

Russian respondents in**⊠**poll by the independent Levada Center at**⊠**the start of June 2016.

The

countries have**\textstyraditionally** enjoyed a good relationship, with only 1 percent of **\textstyraditionship** Russians judging Turkey as hostile before the jet's downing in 2015.

Original url:

https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/09/09/russia-unenthusiatic-to-mend-ties-with-turkey-says-neg otiator-a55287