

Admiral Kuznetsov's Aircraft May Redeploy to Land Base After Second Crash

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Russia's Admiral Kuznetsov aircraft carrier may halt flight operations after losing two combat aircraft in less than a month.

The Defense Ministry could suspend flights to and from the Admiral Kuznetsov and move its planes inland from the carrier's current location in the Mediterranean Sea if the problems onboard cannot be resolved, a source in the military [told](#) the Kommersant newspaper.

The plan contradicts Monday's official statement by the Defense Ministry, which claimed that the aircraft carrier would continue its mission.

Aircrafts would be relocated to Russia's Hmeimim airbase in Syria's Latakia province, sources told Kommersant. On Nov. 26, the Jane's Defense Weekly journal published satellite photos showing that some of the Kuznetsov's planes were already present at the airbase.

Russia deployed the Admiral Kuznetsov to the Mediterranean Sea at the beginning of

November to assist in the country's military campaign in Syria. However, the aircraft carrier has proven less than impressive.

While traveling to the Mediterranean as part of an eight-ship convey, the Admiral Kuznetsov faced international ridicule for the enormous cloud of diesel smoke pluming from its smokestack. Upon arriving in Syria, the carrier lost two fighter jets to seemingly straightforward technical problems.

The Russian authorities have now launched an investigation into both incidents to determine whether the crashes were caused by pilot error or technical failures in the carrier's arresting gear. The arresting gear, which catches the aircraft as it lands, was initially implicated in both incidents.

In the first incident, [the Nov. 13 crash of a Mig-29 fighter jet](#), the gear was undergoing repairs as a pilot prepared to land on the deck. The pilot requested permission to divert to another airfield, but his request was denied. The plane eventually ran out of fuel and the pilot was forced to eject.

In the second incident, [the Dec. 5 crash of an Su-33 fighter jet](#), the arresting gear's cable broke, and the pilot of the Su-33 failed to execute a proper go-around. That pilot also ejected and was unharmed.

Read about [life on board the aircraft carrier Admiral Kuznetsov](#).

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