

Kremlin Says Merkel, Putin to Discuss Middle East Crisis in Moscow

By [Reuters](#)

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Putin and Merkel will discuss the Middle East crisis. **dpa**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel will travel to Russia on Jan. 11 for talks with President Vladimir Putin on the crisis triggered by the killing of top Iranian military commander Qassem Soleimani in a U.S. air strike, the Kremlin press service said.

The Kremlin said Merkel is traveling to Russia at Putin's invitation and that the two leaders also plan to discuss the situations in Syria, Libya and Ukraine.

Merkel's spokesman said German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas would accompany her on the trip.

Soleimani, viewed as the second most powerful man in Iran, was killed at Baghdad airport last Friday by a U.S. drone.

The attack has taken long-simmering U.S.-Iranian hostilities into uncharted waters and

stoked concerns about a major conflagration.

Putin and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron already discussed their concerns over the killing of Soleimani in a phone call Friday.

According to the Kremlin, the phone call was initiated by the French leader. The statement said Macron and Putin agreed that U.S. actions have the potential to seriously aggravate the situation in the Middle East.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also held telephone talks with Turkey's national intelligence chief and Iran's chief of general staff over the killing of Soleimani, local news agencies reported Monday, citing the Russian Defense Ministry.

Shoigu and the Head of Turkey's National Intelligence Organization Hakan Fidan discussed possible joint actions to reduce tensions in the region, Interfax cited the Defense Ministry as saying.

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