The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

# FSB Chief Calls for Cooperation With Taliban in Fight Against Drug Trafficking

November 26, 2024



Taliban delegation at the international economic forum in Kazan. **Vladimir Smirnov / TASS**

The head of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) has called for working with the Taliban in combating drug and arms trafficking despite the militant movement being officially recognized as a terrorist organization in the country, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

FSB Director Alexander Bortnikov made the remarks during a meeting of intelligence and security agency chiefs from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a regional organization of former Soviet republics.

"In light of the Taliban's measures against ISIS, I believe it is possible to establish constructive cooperation with the Afghan authorities and their special services in this area," Bortnikov was quoted as saying by Interfax.

The FSB chief has previously supported removing the Taliban from Russia's list of terrorist organizations, adding that "Russia is finalizing the issue of removing the Taliban from the

list."

Earlier on Tuesday, a bill proposing the Taliban's removal from the list was submitted to the lower-house State Duma.

If passed, the legislation would enable Russia's Prosecutor General to petition for an organization's temporary removal from the list if it can be demonstrated that the group has ceased activities supporting or promoting terrorism in Russia.

Presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov expressed the Kremlin's support for such a move, saying that "it is very important to develop contacts with them [the Taliban], especially since this is a neighboring region."

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