

Fate of Russian Military Bases in Syria Undecided, Kremlin Admits

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Russia's Khmeimim airbase in Syria. kremlin.ru

The fate of Russian military bases in Syria following the surprise downfall of Bashar al-Assad remains unclear, the Kremlin said Monday.

The Tartus Naval Base and Khmeimim Air Base are Russia's only military outposts outside the former Soviet Union and have been key to the Kremlin's activities in Africa and the Middle East. But the ousting of Moscow's long-time ally Assad in a shock rebel offensive has brought their future into question.

"There are no final decisions on this," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Monday. "We are in contact with representatives of the forces that now control the situation in the country."

Moscow said Sunday it had evacuated some of its diplomatic staff from the country. Just days earlier, satellite images [released](#) by the company Maxar appeared to show Russian military personnel packing up equipment at Khmeimim Air Base.

Russian diplomats [told](#) The Moscow Times last week that a complete Russian withdrawal from Syria, including the Tartus naval base and the Khmeimim airbase, was likely. Russia's Foreign Ministry previously said that it was in contact with anti-Assad insurgents and had received security guarantees.

AFP contributed reporting.

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