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Russia Vows to Help Taliban Fight Islamic State in Afghanistan

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Members of the Taliban delegation at the 2024 St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. **TASS**

Russia is ready to assist the Taliban in fighting the Afghan wing of the Islamic State, known as ISIS-K, President Vladimir Putin's envoy to Afghanistan told state media Friday.

Zamir Kabulov, Putin's special representative, told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency that the Kremlin "sees and appreciates" the Taliban authorities' fight against ISIS-K.

"This group, which professes an ultra-radical ideology of global jihad, is a common enemy for Russia and Afghanistan," he was quoted as saying.

"We'll provide every possible assistance to this country's authorities through specialized structures," Kabulov said.

ISIS-K claimed responsibility for the March 2024 attack on a Moscow concert venue that killed 145 people. In the months that followed, Putin referred to the Taliban as Russia's "ally" in the fight against terrorism.

Russia has steadily built ties with the Taliban since their return to power in 2021 following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan.

On April 17, Russia's Supreme Court removed the Taliban from its list of designated terrorist organizations, where it had been listed since 2003.

The move, which stopped short of formally recognizing the Taliban's government, reflects the Kremlin's shift toward new regional alliances after its invasion of Ukraine strained ties with traditional partners.

Various Russian officials have also called on the West to lift sanctions against the Islamist group.

In the 1980s, the Soviet Union waged a decade-long war on the country, a conflict which saw the emergence of mujahideen resistance fighters — many of whom became Taliban leaders. Historians often cite the war as having contributed to the Soviet Union’s collapse.

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