

Syria's Assad Shunned by Kremlin in Isolated but Luxurious Moscow Exile – Guardian

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Former Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad. kremlin.ru

Former Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has retreated into a secluded life in Moscow after losing power and is no longer of interest to his longtime backer Vladimir Putin, [The Guardian reported](#) Monday.

Assad and his family fled Syria on Dec. 8, 2024, with the Russian military's assistance as rebel forces closed in on Damascus. He left behind a country devastated by 13 years of civil war, with an estimated 620,000 people killed and nearly 14 million displaced.

“Putin has little patience for leaders who lose their grip on power, and Assad is no longer seen as a figure of influence or even an interesting guest to invite to dinner,” a source close to the Kremlin told [The Guardian](#).

According to [The Guardian](#), which based its account on interviews with a family friend,

sources in Russia and Syria and leaked data, the Assads had transferred a significant portion of their wealth to Russia even before their fall from power.

Assad and his family likely live in the elite Rublyovka community west of Moscow, where another deposed leader, former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, is believed to reside, the newspaper reported.

They reportedly spend much of their time shopping at high-end boutiques and furnishing their Moscow home with luxury items. Leaked data shows that Assad's daughter Zein has registered at an upmarket pedicure salon and has a membership at an elite Moscow gym.

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Despite their wealth, the family has struggled to integrate into Russian society.

The only public sighting of the family together in the past year was at Zein al-Assad's graduation ceremony at the prestigious Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) this summer. Assad himself did not attend.

Assad has been studying Russian and taking refresher courses in ophthalmology, a profession he trained for in London and practiced in Damascus before entering politics.

"It's a passion of his, he obviously doesn't need the money," a family friend told The Guardian, suggesting his potential patients could be wealthy members of Moscow's elite.

Assad reportedly sought to give interviews to the Kremlin-backed network RT and a prominent right-wing U.S. podcaster, but has not yet been granted permission.

Russia's Ambassador to Iraq Elbrus Kutrashvili told Iraqi media in November that the former Syrian leader is barred from any political or media activity.

"Assad may live here but cannot engage in political activities ... He has no right to engage in any media or political activity. Have you heard anything from him? You haven't, because he is not allowed to — but he is safe and alive," Kutrashvili said.

Assad's wife and sons have made several trips from Moscow to the United Arab Emirates, a country they frequently visited while still in power.

The family had initially hoped to permanently relocate there from Moscow, given the language barriers and isolation they face in Russia, according to the family friend.

But even the UAE is unwilling for now to host Assad, The Guardian reported.

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