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Russia in Talks With Syria to 'Reformat' Military Bases

June 10, 2026



A Russian air missile defense system at Hmeimim airbase in western Syria. **Russian Defense Ministry / AFP**

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that it is in talks with the Syrian government regarding the "possible reformatting" of its military bases in the country.

Questions over the future of Moscow's control of the Tartus naval base and the Hmeimim airbase have mounted since the December 2024 ouster of Russian ally Bashar al-Assad.

The current government, led by President Ahmed al-Sharaa, has signaled a willingness to cooperate with Russia while simultaneously calling for the extradition of Assad, who was granted political asylum in Moscow.

During a weekly press briefing, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova stated that cooperation was "developing very actively" with Syria's government.

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When asked about reports that Tartus is set to become a logistics hub for Russian imports into Syria, Zakharova said that a "possible reformatting" was on the table, though she noted the details fall under the purview of Russia's Defense Ministry.

"Within the framework of contacts with Syrian partners, the issue of Russia's military presence in Syria is also being discussed, including in the context of a possible reformatting of the functionality of Russian military facilities," Zakharova said.

Hmeimim and Tartus are Russia's only military bases outside the former Soviet Union.

The Wall Street Journal, citing U.S. officials and satellite imagery, reported last week that a U.S.-sanctioned Russian cargo ship had resupplied Tartus last month, potentially carrying equipment bound for Hmeimim.

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