

Russia Says Syria Base Deal Will Boost Ties, Source Says Some Russian Forces Will Stay

By [Reuters](#)

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Russian servicemen at the Khmeimim air base, 2023. **Russia's Defense Ministry**

Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that a deal reached with Syria on the future of Moscow's military bases in the country would boost ties between the nations, and a Syrian source said some Russian forces would still be stationed there under the agreement.

Syria's state news agency cited the Syrian Foreign Ministry on Sunday as saying Syria and Russia had reached a memorandum of understanding to settle the future of Russian bases at Tartus and Khmeimim.

The bases' future became uncertain after Russian ally Bashar al-Assad fled the country in 2024. The memorandum followed 18 months of intensive negotiations.

The ministry was quoted as saying the Syrian state would take over management of civilian

facilities, including Khmeimim airport and the commercial berth at Tartus port, allowing them to gradually integrate into the country's civilian administration.

Military facilities would be repurposed as joint training centers, with the transition to be completed within three months.

Bases help Moscow project power

Russia, which granted asylum to Assad and his family, views the bases as giving it geopolitical clout in the Middle East and as boosting its ability to project power in the region, across the Mediterranean and into Africa.

The Tartus facility is Russia's only Mediterranean repair and replenishment hub, and Moscow has used Syria as a staging post to fly its military contractors in and out of Africa.

"We regard the signing on Aug. 9 of the memorandum between the Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic on the operation of our bases in Khmeimim and Tartus as an important step aimed at further improving bilateral cooperation in the military sphere," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"We believe that reaching this agreement will give further impetus to the development of the full range of relations between our countries, which are based on a long history of friendship and partnership," it added.

A Syrian source familiar with the terms of the deal said Russian forces would still be stationed at the new training centers but did not have details on how many would be there.

A Syrian court sentenced Assad to death on Tuesday after a trial in absentia, convicting him of crimes including killings, torture and arbitrary arrest during the country's nearly 14-year war.

Separately, Russia's state TASS news agency reported that Russia would reopen its cultural center in Damascus — the so-called Russian House — after a Russian delegation held talks with Syrian officials during the weekend.

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