

Russia to Help Tajikistan Stem Violence, Kremlin Says

September 11, 2015



Tajikistan's President Imomali Rakhmon (L) and Russian President Vladimir Putin pose for a photo at the BRICS Summit in Ufa, July 8, 2015.

President Vladimir Putin will visit Tajikistan next week where he will discuss what Moscow can do to help the Central Asian nation handle a recent bout of violence, the Kremlin's top foreign policy aide said on Friday.

Bloody gun battles killed 22 people in Tajikistan this month, stoking fears of religious-related unrest in the impoverished ex-Soviet state, a close Russian ally.

Putin will visit the Tajik capital Dushanbe on Sept. 14-15 for talks with President Imomali Rakhmon, the Kremlin aide, Yury Ushakov, told reporters.

"We are ready to provide assistance one way or another, as well as political support, and I think this matter will be one of the key ones during talks," said Ushakov.

Asked if Russia could offer military assistance to Rakhmon, Ushakov said: "I don't know in

what way the discussion will develop."

Moscow has a military base in Tajikistan and worries instability there could grow following the withdrawal of NATO troops from neighboring Afghanistan, or from conflict in the Middle East, where the Islamic State has captured swaths of territory, spilling over.

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