

Moscow Says Russia, Iran, Turkey in 'Close Contact' Over Syria Conflict

By [AFP](#)

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Syrian opposition fighters ride on a motorcycle past Syrian army planes at the Al-Nayrab military airport after they took control of the facility in the outskirts of Aleppo. **Omar Albam / AP / TASS**

Russia, Iran and Turkey are in "close contact" over the conflict in Syria, Moscow said Wednesday, after a shock offensive has seen Islamist-led rebels capture the second-largest city of Aleppo.

"The foreign ministers of the three guarantor countries — Russia, Iran and Turkey — are in close contact with each other," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters on Wednesday.

Moscow is a key ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and is supporting his attempts to quash the rebellion with air strikes, while Ankara has historically supported some anti-government forces.

Russia and Turkey brokered a 2016 ceasefire between the various rebel groups and Syrian forces, with Iran joining as a "guarantor state."

Zakharova said Russia was "actively working with international partners to ensure the rapid stabilization of the situation in Syria."

In a phone call on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin told Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that the conflict needed a "speedy end," and condemned "terrorist aggression against the Syrian state."

A senior official from the office of Iran's supreme leader was also in Moscow for talks on Wednesday, the Iranian Embassy said in a statement.

Russia, which announced naval and air force drills in the eastern Mediterranean this week, has accused Ukraine of backing the Syrian Islamist rebels.

At the United Nations on Tuesday, Russia's envoy Vassily Nebenzia said Ukraine had supported the Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) with weapons and instructors, without presenting any evidence.

"Ukrainian military instructors from the GUR are present... training HTS fighters for combat operations," including against Russian troops in Syria, said Nebenzia.

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