

Russia Seeking Turkish Help Evacuating Soldiers From Syria – Reports

December 09, 2024



Russian military at the Khmeimim airbase in Syria. kremlin.ru

Russian troops have requested Turkey's support for their safe exit from Syria following a lightning Islamist-led offensive that resulted in regime change, CNN Turk [reported](#) Sunday.

The broadcaster said that Russia would withdraw ground troops, but that the [request](#) did not extend to its Tartus naval facility or Hmeimim airbase, according to anonymous sources.

The Russian soldiers will reportedly be sent to Turkey-controlled parts of Syria and then evacuated to Russia by air.

Russian troops used those bases in 2015 to help Moscow's ally, the now-toppled president Bashar al-Assad, crush the Syrian opposition and Islamic State terrorists.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that Moscow views the security of the bases as "very important."

"We're doing everything possible and necessary to get in touch with those who can provide

security. And our military are also taking precautionary measures,” he said.

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Peskov told reporters it was “premature” to discuss the future of Tartus and Hmeimim, saying they are “subject for discussion with whoever is going to be in power in Syria.”

He added that Russia was in talks with Turkey, an ally of the rebel forces that ousted Assad after a two-week advance.

On Sunday, Russian news agencies cited anonymous sources saying that the rebels who ousted Assad “guaranteed the security of Russian army bases and diplomatic institutions on Syria’s territory.”

AFP contributed reporting.

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