

Russian jet 'shot down' by Turkish forces after entering Turkish air space

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Fears of WWIII

A Russian air force jet has been shot down by Turkish forces after it strayed into the country's airspace, according to unconfirmed reports. Eyewitnesses reported a large explosion in Huraytan, northern Syria, as three fighter jets were sighted flying overhead, the Express said.

A Turkish-based journalist tweeted that three Turkish planes were responding after radar locked on to some "mysterious" MiG-29 jets, which are a similar model to those used by Russian forces.

The news comes after Turkey scrambled F-16 fighter jets last weekend after a Russian MiG-29 crossed into Turkish territory near the town of Yayladagi, in Hatay province, close to the border with Syria. Turkish jets then escorted the Russian aircraft back into Syrian airspace.

Turkey's prime minister Ahmet Davutoglu has accused Russia of escalating the conflict in Syria, and he claimed that Moscow admitted its warplanes had violated his country's airspace by mistake. Russia's ambassador in Turkey was also summoned in protest at the provocative action.

Russia has been leading a unilateral bombing campaign in Syria after Russian president Vladimir Putin declared war on Islamic State (Isis). Coalition forces led by the US have accused Russia of only entering the conflict to prop up Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad.

Turkish officials have warned Moscow would be held "responsible for any undesired incident" that may occur in the future. Both the Turkish and Russian consulate were unavailable to comment at the time of writing.

Tensions between Russia and the West have been heightened since the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where Moscow is accused of backing the armed rebels in that country. It was thought that relationships had thawed somewhat after Putin met US president Barack Obama this month and said that he planned on taking on IS. However, Russian forces have been targeting US-backed rebel groups, contrary to US goals.

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