

# Russia Blasts Israel: You're to Blame for 15 Russians Killed During Syria Strike

Russia blames downed military aircraft on Israel's 'deliberate provocations' striking Syria ■ France denies involvement, U.S. says plane shot down by Syrian air defense systems.



Russian Air Force Ilyushin Il-20 Kirill Naumenko/Wikipedia

- 'Israel launches series of strikes on targets near Syria's Latakia'
- Russia says Syrian Idlib offensive off the table, Erdogan and Putin agree on buffer zone
- The heart of the Russian air force: The Syrian fighter jet downed by Israel in the Golan Heights

Russia on Tuesday accused Israel of a "hostile provocation" in striking the Syrian port city of Latakia and threatened retaliation after Moscow blamed Israel for indirectly causing a Russian military plane with 15 servicemen on board to be shot down near Syria's Mediterranean coast.

Russia's defense ministry accused Israeli military planes of creating a "dangerous" situation in Latakia, near where the aircraft was downed by Syrian air defense systems, as it claimed Israel warned Moscow about the planned operation one minute beforehand, adding that it was not enough time to get the plane to safety.

The defense ministry said 15 Russian military service people died because of Israel's "irresponsible actions," adding that it reserves the right to take appropriate measures after Israel's hostile actions.

Russian Defence Ministry: Russian Ilyushin Il-20 plane was downed by Syrian Air Defence missile after Israeli F-16 pilots used it as cover thus setting it up to be targeted by AA defence. Such actions can only be classified as a deliberate provocation <https://t.co/qBcqPz2en6> [pic.twitter.com/21mTTNXmpd](https://pic.twitter.com/21mTTNXmpd)

— Russia in RSA ?? (@EmbassyofRussia) September 18, 2018

According to the ministry, the Israeli F-16 jets carrying out the air strikes used the Russian plane as a cover to allow them to approach their targets on the ground without being hit by Syrian anti-aircraft fire.



Infographic of Monday night's alleged attack and incident Russian Defense Ministry

"Hiding behind the Russian aircraft, the Israeli pilots put it in the line of fire of Syrian anti-aircraft systems. As a result the Il-20 ... was shot down by the (Syrian) S-200 missile system," Konashenkov said.

He said the Israeli pilots "could not have failed to see the Russian aircraft, as it was coming in to land from a height of 5 km (three miles). Nevertheless, they deliberately carried out this provocation," Konashenkov said.

Israeli Ambassador to Russia Gary Koren was summoned to the Russian Foreign Ministry following the incident, and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu informed his Israeli counterpart, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman, that Moscow holds Israel wholly to blame for the shooting down of a Russian military plane near Syria.

The Kremlin was extremely concerned by the incident and President Vladimir Putin expressed his condolences for those who were killed, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

The Russian Defense Ministry said a recovery operation in the Mediterranean Sea is underway and that it has already located the wreckage in the sea and has retrieved some bodies and some fragments of the plane.



Screen capture of Twitter video allegedly showing strike attributed to France and Israel in Syria, September 18, 2018 Twitter

A U.S. official earlier said Washington believed the aircraft, which is an Il-20 turbo-prop plane used for electronic reconnaissance, was inadvertently shot down by anti-aircraft artillery operated by Moscow's ally, the Syrian government.

Around the time the plane disappeared, the Syrian coastal city of Latakia, near a

Russian airbase to which the Il-20 was returning, came under attack from “enemy missiles” and missile defence batteries responded, Syrian state media reported.

The defense ministry in Moscow said the aircraft was returning to the Russian-run Hmeymim airbase in Latakia province when, at about 11 P.M. Moscow time (20:00 GMT), it disappeared from radar screens.

The plane was over the Mediterranean Sea about 35 km (20 miles) from the Syrian coastline, Russia’s TASS news agency quoted the ministry as saying in a statement.

“The trace of the Il-20 on flight control radars disappeared during an attack by four Israeli F-16 jets on Syrian facilities in Latakia province,” the statement was quoted as saying.

“At the same time Russian air control radar systems detected rocket launches from the French frigate Auvergne which was located in that region.”

The fate of the 14 people on board the missing plane is unknown, and a rescue operation has been organized out of the Hmeymim base, the ministry said.

The Israeli military had no reaction, saying it does not comment on “foreign reports.” French military spokesman Colonel Patrik Steiger told Reuters. “We deny any involvement.”

A series of unusual airstrikes on Syria were attributed to Israel on Monday night. The official SANA news agency reported that ten people were injured in the attack, eight of whom were shortly discharged after being admitted to a nearby hospital.

According to Syrian media, missiles were fired toward military targets close to three large cities in the north of Syria: Latakia, Homs and Hama.

In recent weeks there has been a significant uptick in the amount of reports attributing attacks to Israel. Previous attacks, according to foreign media, mostly targeted the area of the Damascus International Airport.

---

Source: <https://www.haaretz.com/middle-east-news/russian-military-aircraft-believ>

ed-to-be-shot-down-by-syria-defenses-1.6489773

[Disclaimer]