



By: TA | AP Brief

# Syria takes back control from Russia of two Mediterranean bases



Russian forces in Syria will give up control of two strategic bases on the Mediterranean coast, which will be used as joint Russia-Syrian training centers under a new agreement between the two countries, Syria's Foreign Ministry said Sunday.

Russia was the top political and military ally of ousted President **Bashar Assad** during the country's civil war between 2011 and 2024.

Assad was ousted in December 2024 by Islamist insurgents led by current interim President Ahmad al-Sharaa and has since fled into **exile in Russia**.

Throughout the conflict, the Hmeimem air base and the Tartus naval base were key Russian military outposts in the eastern Mediterranean.

Under the new agreement between Damascus and Moscow, Syria will take control of the Hmeimem air base and the commercial berth at Tartus port as part of its civil administration.

The military facilities at both sites will become "joint training" centers, the Foreign Ministry said.

The new arrangements represent a "reorganizing of the Russian presence" along Syria's coast, the ministry said.

"This move marks the most significant development since negotiations began approximately a year and a half ago, paving the way for a new phase in Syrian-Russian relations," the statement read.

Russia did not immediately comment on the agreement.

## Strong bilateral ties

Moscow did not interfere during the lightning insurgency that led to Assad's overthrow, but it provided the longtime Syrian leader and his family asylum.

After Assad's ouster Russian troops remaining in Syria **gradually left the country** except for those stationed at the bases.

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Al-Sharaa has **visited President Vladimir Putin** in Moscow twice since taking power, with the two Mediterranean bases being key points of discussion.

Since Assad's ouster, Syria has also bolstered its ties with the United States, Europe, and neighboring Arab countries that had cut ties with Damascus during Assad's crackdown on protests.

Washington has lifted most of its crippling sanctions on the country, and French President **Emmanuel Macron** made a visit to Syria in July during which he announced that the two countries would appoint respective ambassadors for the first time in 14 years.