



PRESS RELEASE
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**Excerpts from the press statement by President
Vladimir Putin following Russian-Turkish talks**

(Sochi, September 17, 2018)



The President and I have just had very substantive and constructive talks. This is our fourth meeting this year. As you know, only ten days ago we both took part in a Russian-Turkish-Iranian summit in Tehran on the Syrian settlement process.

We certainly devoted a fair amount of attention to reaching a settlement in Syria. Russia and Turkey are working closely to resolve the crisis in that country. We are working to bolster the ceasefire and improve the humanitarian situation.

We focused, in particular, on the current situation in Idlib province, considering the presence there of large units of militants and their infrastructure.

In the course of today's talks, today's consultations, we managed to arrive at significant solutions, to make progress in solving this critical problem and to arrive at coordinated solutions.

Let me recall that the concerns of the Russian side – and we were one of the nations that set up that de-escalation zone – our concerns today have to do with the threat posed by the militants concentrated there both to the province of Aleppo, the city of Aleppo, and our military facilities on Syrian territory: Tartus and Khmeimim.

We reviewed the situation in detail and decided to establish by October 15 a demilitarised area 15-20 km deep along the contact line between the armed opposition and government troops, with radical militants to be withdrawn from the area, including al-Nusra. Also by October 10, based on the Turkish President's proposal, to secure the withdrawal of heavy military equipment, tanks, multiple rocket launchers, cannon and mortars of all opposition groups. Turkish mobile patrol groups and Russian military police units will conduct the monitoring of the demilitarised zone. Also to restore transit along the Aleppo-Latakia and Aleppo-Hama routes before the end of 2018, also at the suggestion of the Turkish side.

Russia and Turkey have reaffirmed their commitment to fight terrorism in Syria in all its forms and guises. It is our common opinion that practical efforts to fulfill the planned steps will give an added boost to the political settlement process in Syria, step up work on the Geneva platform and contribute to the return of peace to Syrian soil.

This approach is generally supported by the leadership of the Syrian Arab Republic. We will soon hold additional consultations with the Syrian government.

It is important that both Russia and Turkey intend to continue to fully utilise the Astana format and the opportunity to find long-term political solutions in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations.

We will continue working to form a constitutional committee from among representatives of the Syrian government, opposition forces and civil society. The objective is for it to begin work as soon as possible.

I would like to thank you, Mr President, and all our Turkish colleagues for the intense but constructive and successful work we did together today.

Thank you for your attention.

18 September 2018