

---

## **IRAN COMMITS HAMADAN AIRBASE TO RUSSIA FOR 'AS LONG AS NEEDED'**

-

22.08.2016

---

RT, 21 August 2016

Iran will allow the Russian air force to use its Hamadan airbase for as long as Moscow sees fit, the countrys Defense Minister said, after Russian planes used the Iranian airfield to bomb terrorists in Syria for the first time this week.

Russia can station its forces at the base for as long as they need to support their mission against terrorists in Syria, Brigade General Hossein Dehghan said during a news conference on Saturday. Dehghan stressed that the base is solely to be used to launch airstrikes that target gatherings, bases, and activities of terrorists.

The Minister also stressed that the cooperation with Russia is based on the Islamic Republics general policies and the approval of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran. Permission to deploy an undisclosed number of Tupolev Tu-22M3 supersonic long-range strategic bombers and Sukhoi Su-34 strike fighters was granted at the request of Syria the Minister pointed out.

It is a military decision made in the framework of cooperation in fighting IS and other terrorists, which was organized at the request of the Syrian government, the Defense Minister said.

The defense chief also brushed aside criticism voiced earlier by the Iranian parliament over the Russian deployment, which the lawmakers said violates Article 146 of the Islamic Republics constitution.

Mejlis has nothing to do with this topic, Dehghan said.

In autumn of last year when Moscow began its air campaign, Russia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria established a joint information center in Baghdad to coordinate their operations against Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIL/ISIS) militants.

Prior to expanding their cooperation, Moscow and Tehran signed a military agreement allowing Russian aircraft to be stationed at Hamadan. The core benefit for the Russian air force is a drastic reduction in flying time to terrorist targets in Syria.

Following the deployment, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was quick to brush aside any speculation regarding the legality of the move, after receiving criticism from the US State Department.

These military aircraft are used by air forces after Irans authorization for taking part in the anti-terrorist operation in Syria after a legitimate request from its government, Lavrov said. There is no reason to suspect Russia of violating UN Security Council resolution 2231 [on the sale and transfer of arms to Iran].

---

Kaynak/Source: