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## **RUSSIA AND TURKEY SIGN DEAL TO 'COORDINATE' SYRIA STRIKES**

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Russia and Turkey have signed an agreement to "coordinate" their air forces in Syria when conducting strikes "on terrorist targets", the Russian defence ministry said Thursday.

The ministry said the agreement, signed in Moscow, would help "prevent accidents involving planes and drones" in the Syrian air space.

Relations between Moscow and Ankara took a hit in 2015 after Turkey shot down a Russian fighter jet near the Syria-Turkey border.

It took Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan months to apologise for the incident.

After he did, Russia brought Turkey onboard as a key partner to broker a peace settlement in Syria.

Moscow and Ankara agreed to back a ceasefire last month between the Syrian government and rebel groups which went into effect on December 30.

The truce, which has been observed in most parts of the country, does not include the Islamic State (IS) group.

Critics have accused Russia and Turkey of using their campaigns against the IS group as a cover to target other groups, including moderate rebels and Kurdish forces.

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Kaynak/Source: