

Russian President Criticizes France For Not Doing Enough to Solve Syria Crisis



New Delhi, October 17 (RHC)-- Russian President Vladimir Putin has criticized France for not contributing enough to international efforts to settle the crisis in Syria, saying Paris has not properly responded to Russia's calls for joint action on Syria.

Speaking Sunday during a BRICS summit in India, Putin said: "France is not so deeply involved in the settlement of the Syrian conflict," adding that Russia is always ready to talk with "especially large and great powers like France with all its capabilities" on ways to end the five-year conflict in Syria.

Putin noted that France had backed down on its previous promises to cooperate with Russian forces in Syria. "We remember when the (French) Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier approached the coast of Syria -- and we had seemingly agreed to work jointly -- but a few days later it turned away and headed toward the Suez Canal," Putin said, asking: "What does that say?"

Putin blamed France for the cancellation of a visit by the Russian leader to Paris on October 19, saying it was the French authorities who decided to change the agenda of the trip and raise the issue of Syria. "We have other issues apart from Syria and we could have discussed other issues," he said.

Tensions have escalated between Paris and Moscow since Russia vetoed a French resolution at the United Nations Security Council which called for a halt to the bombing of the Syrian city of Aleppo. Putin had accused France of deliberately pushing for the UN proposal to heap pressure on Russia as it knew that Moscow would veto the resolution. He said the move was aimed at "inflaming the situation and fanning hysteria around Russia."

Under the air cover provided by Russia, Syria has stepped up attacks on militant-held parts of the northwestern city of Aleppo over the past two weeks. That has angered France and other western allies who claim that Russian fighter jets indiscriminately target the civilians in the city.

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