

Damascus Says Downing of Syrian Jet Proves Washington's Support for Terrorism



Damascus, June 20 (RHC)-- Damascus has written to the United Nations, saying the recent U.S. downing of a Syrian air force jet shows beyond any doubt Washington's backing for terrorism.

On Sunday, a U.S. Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet shot down a Syrian SU-22, which was conducting an operation against Daesh terrorists on the outskirts of the city of Raqqah. In two letters addressed to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the world body's Security Council, the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates said on Monday that the shootdown incident revealed the "real face and the underhanded goal" of the U.S.-led coalition, which is allegedly fighting terrorists in Syria.

Sunday's aggression "exposes the political and military inclinations and the malicious intentions of the U.S. and its illegal alliance to manage terrorism and invest in it to achieve its objectives and realize the Western project in the region."

The U.S.-led coalition claimed in a statement that the downed jet had been dropping bombs near U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and it was brought down "in accordance with rules of engagement and in collective self-defense of coalition partnered forces." However, Russia's Foreign

Ministry reacted angrily and urged a “careful investigation by the U.S. command” into the incident.

It also announced a halt to a hotline with the U.S. meant to minimize incidents in Syrian airspace and vowed to track U.S.-led coalition aircraft in central Syria as “targets.” The statement warns: “Any flying objects, including planes and drones of the international coalition, discovered west of the Euphrates River will be tracked as aerial targets by Russia's air defenses on and above ground.”

The Syrian Foreign Ministry said the U.S. had “committed a new crime ... by intentionally shooting down” the Syrian jet. It is “shameful” that Washington tried to justify its aggression by making statements far from the truth, particularly since the Syrian plane fell in an area close to Daesh-held Resafa City, the ministry noted.

It also accused the U.S. military of seeking to undermine the capability of the Syrian army that is the only effective force exercising its legitimate right to fight terrorism in the country.

The shootdown comes at a time when the Syrian army and its allies are making gains against Daesh in al-Badiya desert area, the ministry said, warning against the repercussions of the U.S. criminal act on counter-terrorism efforts. It further stressed that such attacks would not dissuade Syria from continuing its operation against Daesh and Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terror outfits.

“Syria condemns this aggression; it calls on the Security Council to break its silence and condemn these cowardly and reckless military actions, particularly as they are carried out by an illegal coalition,” the Syrian Foreign Ministry pointed out.

It concluded that Sunday’s shootdown cannot be separated from the crimes committed by the US and its alliance against the Syrian army in the town of At-Tanf as well as in those against civilians through deadly strikes in the north and west of Raqqah.

On two occasions in June and May, U.S. warplanes attacked a Syrian military position near At-Tanf, killing an unspecified number of people and causing some material damage. The U.S. claimed that the Syrian forces who came under the attack posed a threat to its forces in Syria, but Damascus rejected the claim.

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