

Politics

# Putin Meets Assad Amid Efforts to Renew Syria-Turkey Relations

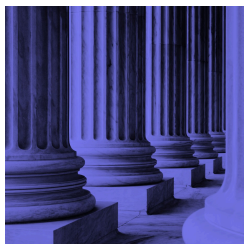
- US has opposed normalization push and has troops in Syria
- Deal could come as early as August, Moscow-based expert says



Vladimir Putin meets with Bashar al-Assad in Moscow, on July 24. Source: Kremlin Press Office

By [Henry Meyer](#)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin met his Syrian counterpart Bashar Al-Assad this week, the Kremlin said, part of a Moscow-backed push to restore ties between Damascus and neighboring Turkey.

“I am very interested in your opinion on how the situation in the region as a whole is developing,” Putin told Assad in a video released by the

Kremlin on Thursday. “Unfortunately, there is a tendency toward escalation, we can see that. This applies directly to Syria.”

The Syrian president, who met Putin Wednesday evening, said their talks were “very important” considering the events taking place in the world and in the Eurasian region. Assad last met the Russian leader in March 2023.

Any normalization of ties between Turkey and Syria would mark a setback for the US in the region, and the push is part of broader efforts by Moscow and Beijing to challenge Washington in the Middle East. The US has about 900 troops in northeastern Syria in support of its Kurdish allies, a presence that Moscow and Damascus have long sought to end.

The meeting follows Assad’s reintegration into the Arab League in May last year, a triumph for a leader under heavy US and European penalties for atrocities committed during Syria’s civil war.

Last month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan echoed Assad in expressing a willingness to restore diplomatic relations, a policy shift that could help end the long-running conflict in Syria.

Read more: [Turkey’s Erdogan, Syria’s Assad Signal Readiness to Restore Ties](#)

Erdogan said that restoring friendly ties with Assad is not “impossible.” The two leaders, who once had a close relationship, fell out early in the Syrian civil war that started in 2011 due to Turkey’s support for the rebel group seeking to overthrow Assad.

The Syrian president said earlier that he’s open to restoring ties based on respect for his country’s sovereignty.

An agreement could be reached as early as August and announced at a three-way summit with Putin, Assad and Erdogan, said Elena Suponina, a Middle East expert based in Moscow.

A sticking point between Turkey and Syria over demands from Damascus for a pullout of Turkish forces in the north of the country could be resolved through a phased withdrawal, according to Suponina.

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