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## China ‘to upgrade Syria military ties’

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China is to provide enhanced military cooperation with Syria, whose own military is involved in fighting a foreign-backed militancy in the country.

Guan Youfei, the Chinese military official charged with overseeing international cooperation, announced the development on Tuesday.

The official, who visited Syria for talks with Syrian Defense Minister Fahad Jassim al-Frej, said Beijing was seeking closer military ties with Damascus.

“The Chinese and Syrian militaries traditionally have a friendly relationship, and the Chinese military is willing to keep strengthening exchanges and cooperation with the Syrian military,” he said.

Youfei also said the two sides had “reached a consensus” on the Chinese military providing humanitarian aid to Syrians, without elaborating.

The Chinese official and al-Frej also discussed the enhancement of training for Syrian soldiers by the Chinese military.

The visit marks a new precedence, given China’s refusal in the past to proactively concern itself with the Syrian conflict.

China has, meanwhile, been vocally backing Russia's anti-terrorism efforts in Syria, which has seen Moscow carrying out large-scale bombings of Takfiri militants there.



A video grab made on November 23, 2015 shows an explosion after airstrikes carried out by the Russian Air Force in the western Syrian province of Dayr al-Zawr

The visit also featured a meeting between the Chinese official and a Russian general, Russia Today reported.

The foreign-backed militancy in Syria, which enjoys vigorous Western support, has been plaguing the Arab country for the past five years, killing thousands and displacing millions.

Youfei, the Chinese official, meanwhile, reminded that his country, a permanent United Nations Security Council member, was insistently exploring diplomatic channels to find a political solution to Syria's crisis.