

Barack Obama calls Russia 'the outlier' in fight against Islamic State

25/11/2015 12:48 by admin

Washington: President Barack Obama is offering a harsh assessment of Russia's role as he addresses the global effort to fight the Islamic State.

Obama said flatly that "Russia's the outlier" in the fight against IS.

Obama says a coalition of 65 countries is pushing back against the Islamic State, from places as far-flung as Australia and Southeast Asia.

And he says that Russia, on the other hand, is part of "a coalition of two." He pointed to Russia and Iran as supporting the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

Obama says that Russian cooperation in resolving the Syrian civil war would be "enormously helpful."

Obama spoke Tuesday during a joint news conference with French President Francois Hollande (frahn-SWAH' oh-LAWND').

President Barack Obama says the downing of a Russian warplane by Turkey points to an "ongoing problem" with Russia's airstrikes in Syria.

Obama says Turkey "has a right to defend its territory and its airspace." And he says that Russia is operating very close to the Turkish border as it goes after moderate opposition groups that are supported by Turkey and a wide range of countries.

The president says that if Russia would instead concentrate its airstrikes on the Islamic State group, then mistakes would be "less likely to occur."

Obama is urging both Turkey and Russia to take measures "to discourage any kind of escalation" over the downing of the Russian warplane.

And Obama says that the downing of the plane underscores the importance of moving forward on efforts to find a political solution to the civil war in Syria.

The president spoke during a joint news conference with French President Francois Hollande.

French President Francois Hollande says he plans to tell Russian President Vladimir Putin that France can work with Russia, if Moscow concentrates its military action in Syria on fighting the Islamic State group.

Hollande is speaking at the White House alongside President Barack Obama. He says France wants Russia to commit fully to a political solution in Syria and to eradicate terrorism.

Hollande says France wants to work with all countries that are willing to find and implement solutions to Syria's civil war. He says, "We do not want to exclude anyone."

Hollande also says the Syrian refugee crisis is directly relevant to Europe. He says if Europe abandons the millions of refugees fleeing bombs and the Islamic State, it would betray what Europe stands for.

But the French president says Europe must secure its borders. He says Turkey plays an important role. He says Europe must work with Russia to find solutions so that refugees can stay close to their country of origin.

- AP