

## **Anti-Russia sanctions harming fight against terrorism, says President Putin**

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**Moscow:** Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that the rift created by anti-Moscow sanctions was affecting cooperation in the battle against terrorism.

### **File pic of Russian President Vladimir Putin**

"All these restrictions in the economic and political spheres drive apart states, and prevent us from joining forces in combating a common evil -- terrorism," Russian President said during a meeting with country's top lawmakers in Moscow on Wednesday.

"Unfortunately, the situation is not entirely in our hands. We hope that recent tragic events, including the attack in Germany, will prompt our partners to work more closely on this issue, which is important to all of us," Putin added, referring to Monday's truck attack in Berlin that left 12 persons killed and dozens injured.

Joint anti-terrorism and drug-trafficking operations between Russia and NATO have been suspended since Crimea's secession from Ukraine in 2014.

Efforts to build an anti-Islamic State coalition in Syria also suffered a high-profile collapse, though Moscow has discussed reviving the drive with the incoming White House administration.

Relations with the US suffered a setback this week when Washington announced a raft of new sanctions against individuals and state-connected companies, and two ships connected to Crimea.

Reacting to the latest sanctions, Russia's Foreign Ministry has said that the recently introduced US sanctions "will not be left without reply".

"Instead of focusing on coordinating efforts to fend off the challenges of our age, chiefly extremism and terrorism, the White House continues looking for ways to 'punish' us by inflicting pain," the Ministry said in a statement released yesterday.

"Washington should have learned a long time ago that these efforts are unpromising, and doomed to failure, and the new restrictions will not be left without reply," the statement added.

Without mentioning President-elect Donald Trump by name, the ministry appealed for the new administration to "drop the confrontational approach of the Administration of Barack Obama" and move to practical steps to normalize bilateral relations.

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