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<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/09/06/322362/russian-landing-ship-en-route-to-syria/>

Russia sending large landing ship to Syrian coast: navy source

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Russia is dispatching a massive landing ship carrying ‘special cargo’ toward the Syrian coast, a report says.

Russia’s Interfax news agency quoted an unnamed Russian navy official as saying that Nikolai Filchenkov will leave the Ukrainian port city of Sevastopol later on Friday.

“The vessel will dock in Novorossiysk, where it will take special cargo on board and head to the designated area of military service in the eastern Mediterranean,” the source said.

The source, however, did not elaborate on the nature of the cargo.

Russia has recently deployed other warships to the Eastern Mediterranean in an effort to beef up its naval grouping in the region amid the intensifying US war rhetoric against Syria.

On September 1, Moscow dispatched its Priazovye reconnaissance ship tasked with collecting information in the tense region, which will be operating separately from the naval unit.

Russian military sources said on September 4 that Moscow was sending three more naval ships, including a missile cruiser, to the Eastern Mediterranean. The missile cruiser is to be joined by two other vessels, a destroyer from Russia's Baltic Fleet and a frigate from the Black Sea Fleet.

The war rhetoric against Syria intensified after Syria militants claimed the army had carried out a fatal chemical weapons attack in the suburbs of Damascus on August 21, which killed hundreds of Syrians.

Damascus has repeatedly said the attack was a false-flag operation carried out by the Takfiri groups in a bid to draw in foreign military intervention.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on September 3 that Moscow has its own plans to deal with a US military offensive against Syria.

"We have our own ideas about what we would do and how we would do it if the situation develops toward the use of force or otherwise," Putin said.