

# Syria's Bashar al-Assad and family in Moscow after Russia granted them asylum: reports

Ousted Syrian president Bashar Assad has fled to Russia after Islamist rebels rolled into the capital Damascus and ended his despotic family's 50-year reign of terror.

Assad, who inherited the office from his father in 2000, reportedly slipped out of Syria early Sunday morning as rebels closed in on his palace. He arrived in Moscow later in the day, according Russian state news agency Tass.

A longtime protector of the Assad regime's, Moscow has granted the 59-year-old and his family asylum after they made their way to the city by private jet, the news agencies reported.

Rebels stormed through the gates of Damascus Sunday where they were met with no resistance from the government's army. Most gunfire crackling through the streets has come from celebratory shots in the air, while crowds have filled the city squares waving revolutionary flags and chanting "freedom."

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