

Four Russians Deported From Turkey for Alleged Attempt to Join Islamic State in Syria

By [Ivan Nechepurenko](#)

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Turkish soldiers and an army tank take position at the new site of the Suleyman Shah tomb near the northern Syrian village of Esmé, on the Syrian-Turkish border.

Four Russians have been deported from Turkey after attempting to cross the Turkey-Syria border illegally in order to join the Islamic State terrorist group, RIA Novosti reported Friday, citing Turkey's DHA news agency.

The four Russians, who were not named in the DHA report, were detained in the border city of Kilis by local police and then taken to Istanbul, from where they were sent back to Russia, the news agency reported.

The Russian Embassy in Ankara was cited as saying the report was being verified.

Up to 1,700 Russians are fighting on the side of the Islamic State — a self-declared

international caliphate that controls large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria — in Iraq, the head of the Federal Security Service Alexander Bortnikov told an anti-terrorism summit in Washington last month.

Although no link has been proven between militants in Russia's turbulent North Caucasus and the Islamic State, Russia's Federal Security Service has estimated that hundreds of residents of the North Caucasus have gone to fight against the government in war-torn Syria.

Last September, Al Arabiya news channel released a video reportedly featuring an Islamic State fighter threatening Russian President Vladimir Putin and vowing to wage war in Russia's mainly Muslim North Caucasus republic of Chechnya.

"This message is for you, Vladimir Putin. These are the aircraft you sent to [Syrian President] Bashar [Assad], and we're going to send them to you. Remember that!" the man says in the video.

"We will with the consent of Allah free Chechnya and all of the Caucasus!" a fighter was shown saying in the video.

Addressing Putin personally, the fighter added: "Your throne has already been shaken, it is under threat and will fall with our arrival [in Russia]. ... We're already on our way with the will of Allah!"

Contact the author at i.nechepurenko@imedia.ru

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