

Russian Women Accused of Posing as Jihadist Brides to Dupe Islamic State – Report

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July 30, 2015



In an interview with LifeNews, one of the suspects said that she had received a total of 45,000 rubles (\$752) from members of the Islamic State she met online.

A group of women from the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya have been accused of posing as cash-strapped Jihadist brides in a bid to defraud Islamic State recruiters, Russian tabloid LifeNews reported Thursday.

Members of the Islamic State offered one woman a payment of 10,000 rubles (\$167) to travel to Syria, but rather than purchasing a plane ticket, she pocketed the money and blocked her would-be suitor on social media, LifeNews reported.

Recruiters for the feared terrorist organization, which is banned in Russia, have been particularly active in the largely Muslim republics of the North Caucasus, where corruption

and poverty are rampant and an anti-Moscow Islamic insurgency has simmered for over a decade.

Three women were detained by Chechen police as suspects in the alleged fraud, but were released after signing an agreement not to flee the country, according to LifeNews, which enjoys close ties to the Russian security services.

In an interview with LifeNews, one of the suspects said that she had received a total of 45,000 rubles (\$752) from members of the Islamic State she met online. The woman, who gave her name as Maryam, said that she originally intended to follow the example of friends and join fighters in Iraq and Syria, but ended up just pocketing the cash and remaining in Chechnya, according to LifeNews.

The ruse has also been practiced by other Chechens, including local men who have posed as Muslim women in order to defraud Islamic State fighters, LifeNews reported.

Russian officials, who fear the consequences of battle-hardened Islamic fighters returning to Russia, have estimated that 2,000 Russian citizens are currently fighting for the Islamic State. Ramzan Kadyrov, the head of the Chechen republic, said in an interview with Russian state-run news agency RIA Novosti on Thursday that Islamic State was sending money and specialists to his region amid efforts to spread its influence.

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Original url:

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