

# Islamic State Leader's Death a Boost for Trump if True, Kremlin Says

By [Reuters](#)

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov [kremlin.ru](http://kremlin.ru)

The Kremlin said on Monday that U.S. President Donald Trump will have made a major contribution to the fight against international terrorism if a U.S. assertion that Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is dead is true.

Trump on Sunday announced that Baghdadi had killed himself during a daring overnight raid by elite U.S. special operations forces in Syria and thanked Russia, among others, for its support.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declined to say on Monday if the United States had informed Russia about the operation in advance or provide other details.

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But he told reporters that the Russian military had spotted U.S. planes and drones in the area of Syria where Washington said it had carried out the raid.

"If this information (about Baghdadi's death) is confirmed we can talk about a serious contribution by the president of the United States to the fight against international terrorism," said Peskov.

Russia's Defense Ministry cast doubt on Trump's assertion on Sunday however, saying in a statement it did not have any reliable information about the U.S. operation and citing four reasons why the U.S. version of events looked suspicious.

"The growing number of direct participants in the operation and countries who allegedly took part in this 'operation', each with totally contradictory details, gives rise to justified questions and doubts about whether it took place and in particular how successful it was," the defence ministry said.

Unlike the Kremlin, the ministry also played down Baghdadi's importance, saying that if his death was confirmed it would have "no operational significance" on the situation in Syria or on the actions of remaining militants in Syria's Idlib region.

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