

Rebel Leader Talks of Power Struggle

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A suspected militant's body is seen on the roof of a house Saturday in Makhachkala after a two-day gunbattle.

A new wave of Islamist attacks have swept Dagestan, leaving 13 dead, just as rebel leader Doku Umarov kicked off a leadership quarrel with an al-Qaida envoy Saturday.

Umarov, in a [video](#) posted online, accused Mukhannad, the Arabic militant considered al-Qaida's representative in the region, of trying to oust him as the leader of the North Caucasus insurgency.

Umarov announced his resignation Aug. 2 but retracted the statement the next day. Several Chechen militant leaders have said they will not follow Umarov anymore, Gazeta.ru [reported](#).

It remained unclear Sunday how Mukhannad or the other Islamist warlords had reacted to Umarov's remarks.

But the rebels did manage to carry out several deadly attacks despite the apparent leadership split.

A suicide bomber blew himself up in Dagestan's capital, Makhachkala, late Friday, wounding 26 people, half of them police officers and the other half civilians, when trying to break through to the cordoned-off site of a gunbattle with militants holed up in a house, Interfax reported.

Four suspected militants, including a senior rebel, Alibek Abunazarov, who was on the federal wanted list, were killed and two others were captured Saturday at the end of the two-day gunbattle, news reports said.

The fighting also left two police officers dead and another three wounded, RIA-Novosti said, citing a local police spokesman, who added that the officers shielded civilians they were evacuating with their own bodies.

Also in Makhachkala, two masked men broke into a house of a local school principal and shot her dead at point-blank range late Thursday.

Separately, a security raid in the Dagestani village of Kirovaul left five suspected militants dead early Friday, a spokesman for the regional branch of the Interior Ministry said.

In Chechnya, security forces were pursuing a group of militants in the forested southern mountains, the regional administration said Friday. One soldier died and five were injured in the fighting.

(MT, AP, Reuters)

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