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5 Suspected Militants Killed in Dagestan's Capital

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A police officer taking aim during a shootout in Makhachkala on Friday.

Security forces killed five suspected Islamist militants in coordinated sieges of two housing blocks in Dagestan's capital, Makhachkala, news agencies reported.

Two women were among four insurgents killed in a gunbattle on Ulitsa Engelsa on Saturday, the reports said, citing the National Antiterrorism Committee. Two passers-by were wounded, Interfax reported.

It was the second shootout of the week in which female fighters died in Dagestan. A woman was among the 15 insurgents killed in raids by authorities in Makhachkala and the town of Kaspiisk on Wednesday, the most successful operation in weeks for law enforcement officers, who suffered no casualties.

In a separate incident, an Islamist militant was killed in a shootout in Makhachkala on Friday.

Regional Interior Ministry spokesman Vyacheslav Gasanov said police shot the militant dead

after he holed up in a house in the region.

The militant was identified as a 21-year-old local man who was on a wanted list on suspicion of killing military and police officers, Itar-Tass reported.

The extremists apparently fought back late Saturday, killing a police officer from the economic crimes department in Makhachkala, Interfax reported.

Unidentified assailants pelted the man's car with bullets before escaping in their own car, the report said. An investigation has been opened.

On Sunday, a regular flight from Moscow to Chechnya's capital, Grozny, was interrupted by a bomb scare, Interfax reported, citing a law enforcement source.

The plane, which carried 73 passengers, had to land in Volgograd after an anonymous caller told officials at Moscow's Vnukovo Airport that a bomb had been smuggled aboard, the report said.

No one was hurt in the incident. The plane had to be parked in a isolated spot as its engines cooled off before being searched by bomb technicians, a Vnukovo representative said late Sunday. It was not immediately clear whether there was a bomb on board.

Meanwhile, Ingush President Yunus-Bek Yevkurov reported that more than 400 police and other law enforcement agents have been killed by militants over the past five years in Ingushetia.

Also, more than 3,000 civilians have been wounded in attacks by militants in the region over the same period, Yevkurov said Saturday at one of a string of rallies against terrorism that gathered about 3,500 people across the republic.

Yevkurov's statement was posted on his administration's official web site Sunday. Yevkurov himself was badly wounded by asuicide bombing of his convoy in June 2009, months after his appointment to the region, and spent several months in the hospital.

(MT, AP, Reuters)

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