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Islamic State Claims Child Soldier Executed 'Russian Spies'

By Allison Quinn

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An image from the video of one of the purported spies, who gave his name as Mamayev Jambulat Yesenjanovich.

Russian diplomats in Damascus are looking into the Islamic State's claims that it executed two Russian spies attempting to infiltrate the terrorist organization in Syria, after a video was released Tuesday showing two men said to be Russian agents shot at pointblank range by a young boy.

"At the moment, we have no information that the men portrayed [in the video] are Russian citizens," Oleg Samochkin, a spokesman for the Russian Embassy in Damascus, was cited by Interfax as saying.

Russia's Federal Security Service denied having any knowledge of the two men in comments to RIA Novosti on Tuesday.

But the security service has repeatedly expressed concern about the number of men from Russia's turbulent North Caucasus joining the radical terrorist group. The national Security Council warned in late September that Islamic State fighters who had trained in Syria could prove catastrophic to regional security if they return to Russia and other ex-Soviet states.

The authenticity of the video, released Tuesday by the Islamic State's media arm al-Hayat Media Center, could not be immediately verified.

The two Russian-speaking men in the video identified themselves as Sergei Ashimov, a 30-year-old Russian man who says he was sent to Syria to kill an undisclosed member of the group and find its leader's residence, and Jambulat Mamayev, a 38-year-old man from Kazakhstan who says he was in Syria to gather intelligence on the fighters, news site Meduza reported. The video was quickly deleted from YouTube, but excerpts of it were published by the Daily Mail.

A young boy with long hair is then shown standing behind the two men, clutching a handgun, as another Russian-speaker says from off-camera: “We say to all those tempted to spy on the secrets of the Muslims and mujahedin, we will have no leniency and no mercy on you.” Also in the shot is a heavily armed adult fighter, standing next to the boy.

The video, which appears to be heavily edited, then shows the boy fire at both men execution-style.

The child featured in the video appears to be the same one who starred in an Islamic State training video in late November. That video, which has since been deleted from YouTube, showed child soldiers said to be from Kazakhstan training with automatic rifles.

“I will be the one who slaughters you, non-Muslims,” the boy said in that video.

Contact the author at a.quinn@imedia.ru

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