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FSB Chief Warns Upward of 200 Southern Russians Have Joined Islamic State

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Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the recruitment of Russian students by foreign terrorist organizations was a “very dangerous process.”

More than 200 residents of Russia's Volga Federal District are thought to be fighting alongside the Islamic State terrorist organization in Syria and Iraq, the head of the Federal Security Service (FSB) said Tuesday, the Interfax news agency reported.

Terrorist recruitment and arms trafficking have taken a toll on the southern federal district, which includes Nizhny Novgorod, Samara, Perm, Kirov and several other regions, FSB Director Alexander Bortnikov was quoting as saying at a meeting of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee.

Bortnikov said that two supporters of an "international terrorist organization" were sentenced last year to lengthy prison terms for preparing an attack against a storage and destruction facility for chemical weapons located in the Kirov region.

The Islamic State recently dominated headlines in Russia after 19-year-old Moscow State University student Varvara Karaulova left Moscow last month with a one-way ticket to Istanbul, where she was suspected of having planned to join the terrorist organization in neighboring Syria. Karaulova was detained near Turkey's border with Syria and returned to Moscow last week. She could now face charges for attempting to join a foreign armed group.

Meanwhile, law enforcement officials are probing reports that Mariam Ismailova, a student at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration in Moscow, has likewise fled the country and joined the Islamic State, Russian media reported Tuesday.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the recruitment of Russian students by foreign terrorist organizations was a "very dangerous process" and was constantly being monitored by the country's special services, state news agency RIA Novosti reported Tuesday.

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