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Russian Forces Kill 8 Suspected Islamic State Members in North Caucasus

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An Islamic State flag

Russia's counter-terrorism agency says its forces in the North Caucasus have killed eight militants who had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State group.

The Anti-Terrorism Committee said Sunday that the militants killed in combat in the republic of Ingushetia west of Chechnya were involved in a series of attacks on police. It added that they had recently sworn an oath of allegiance to the Islamic State.

The agency said those killed included the group's leader, Adam Tagilov, who was accused of staging December's attack in Chechnya's capital, Grozny, which left 25 people dead. The raid dented the carefully nurtured image of stability under Chechnya's strongman leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

Russian officials, who fear the consequences of battle-hardened Islamic fighters returning to Russia, have estimated that 2,000 Russian citizens are currently fighting for the Islamic State.

A 26-year-old student from the Russian republic of Dagestan was detained by Turkish authorities as he attempted to cross the border into Syria in an alleged bid to join the Islamic State, the Kommersant newspaper reported Saturday.

According to the report, the student, whose name has been withheld by the authorities, told his parents he was going to Turkey on vacation. Several days into the trip, he sent them a text message saying he was relaxing "on the seaside, two kilometers from Ankara."

Knowing that Ankara is nowhere near the sea, his parents suspected something was wrong, prompting them to fly to Turkey to report their fears to local law enforcement officers. They knew some of their son's friends had previously joined the Islamic State, the report said.

The detained young man denies that he had planned to join the terrorist organization and claimed he was forcibly taken to the border.

(AP, MT)

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