

Russian Warplanes Hit Islamic State in Northern Syria — al-Mayadeen TV

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The channel said the Russian strikes on Thursday also hit rural parts of Deir al-Zor, which is held by Islamic State.

Russian warplanes bombed an airbase in northern Syria on Thursday in what appeared to be Russia's first strikes on a known Islamic State-held target, as well as other areas in the west and east of the country, al-Mayadeen TV said.

The strikes hit areas including Tabqa airbase in Raqqa province, an Islamic State stronghold, the channel said in a newsflash citing its correspondent. Lebanon-based al-Mayadeen has good contacts in Syria.

Islamic State seized Tabqa airbase in August 2014 and killed scores of captive government soldiers, in what was a major symbolic blow for the Syrian military at the time.

The channel said the Russian strikes on Thursday also hit rural parts of Deir al-Zor, which is held by Islamic State. There were also strikes on the countryside of Hama province, in western Syria, it said. There was no immediate confirmation of the strikes on Syrian state media.

Russian's own data analysis carried out after it launched airstrikes against targets inside Syria showed its planes had only struck Islamic State targets, an air force official was quoted as saying by the RIA Novosti news agency on Thursday.

Moscow's account is disputed by U.S. officials and politicians as well as by rebel groups on the ground who say the areas it struck are mostly held by a rival insurgent alliance, which unlike Islamic State is supported by U.S. allies including Arab states and Turkey.

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