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# Five Dead as Syrian Rebels Down Russian Helicopter Near Aleppo

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**Shamil Zhumatov / Reuters**

A Russian Mi-8 military helicopter has been ⊠shot down in the Syrian province of Idlib, the Russian Defense ⊠Ministry's press service confirmed Monday.

The helicopter's five man ⊠crew, consisting of three servicemen and two officers, have been confirmed killed, said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

The⊠ helicopter was returning to a Russian airbase in the regime-held ⊠stronghold of Latakia after dropping humanitarian supplies to civilians ⊠trapped in the rebel holdout of Aleppo, the Defense Ministry said. ⊠Russia is conducting what it claims to be a humanitarian mission to ⊠assist the almost 300,000 civilians trapped in the city after ⊠Russian-backed Syrian forces surrounded it last month.

The⊠ helicopter came under fire from ground positions in the neighboring ⊠Idlib province, between Aleppo and the government-held region of ⊠Latakia. Peskov later told reporters that

the crew was killed in action.

Unverified photos circulating on social network Twitter appeared to show the body of a Russian pilot being dragged through the dirt by Syrian rebel forces, as well as his burnt Russian-government identification cards, an Orthodox icon, and a photo of the pilot's wife.

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