

Russian Defense Ministry Calls Criticism Over Aleppo 'Russophobic hot air'

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Russian Defense Ministry Spokesman Major General Igor Konashenkov today attacked critics of the Syrian army's campaign to push rebels from the country's largest city Aleppo.

"All the theatrical screams supposedly in defense of the 250,000 civilians remaining in Aleppo, especially those voiced by the British leadership and their colleagues in France, are no more than Russophobic hot air," Konashenkov said.

The general said that militants in Aleppo had used 100,000 civilians as "human shields," adding that civilians had fled to government controlled territory as soon as they were able.

Konashenkov denied that NGOs and human rights defenders were present in the rebel controlled enclave besieged by forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar Al Assad.

He also claimed that civilians in rebel held territory had been terrorized by the rebels, particularly if they expressed dissatisfaction or attempted to leave. "There was only hunger and total terror from the militants."

Konashenkov dismissed all footage of Russian bombing in Aleppo and of civilian casualties as “cinema,” saying that such videos were staged by the terrorists.

The general claimed that Syrian government forces found no hospitals or schools in Aleppo that were being used for their intended purpose. He said the facilities were being used by militants as command centers, bomb factories, and Sharia courts.

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