

# Russian Women May Be Among IS Fighters Detained in Iraq

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**Alaa Al-Marjani / Reuters**

Iraqi security forces detained an unidentified number of Russian women following a military operation in the city of Mosul, according to unconfirmed reports cited by the German Deutsche Welle (DW) news outlet [reported](#) on Tuesday.

The Russians were allegedly detained among 20 other women from countries including Turkey, Canada, and Libya, who allegedly traveled to Iraq to join Islamic State.

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DW quoted an Iraqi military commander as saying the women were discovered in a series of underground tunnels built by Islamic State to move throughout the city undetected.

They were reportedly wearing explosive belts when they were arrested.

By mid-2015, 4,700 jihadists from Russia and Central Asia had traveled to Iraq and Syria to join Islamic State, according to the New York-based Soufan Group (TSG). The security think-tank [estimated](#) that the flow of fighters from Russia and the former Soviet Union had increased threefold from June 2014.

In May 2016, Russian security services arrested a 21-year-old student from the Moscow State University, Varvara Karaulova, for attempting to join the radical organization. She was sentenced to more than four years in prison in December 2016.

*\*Islamic State is banned in Russia as a terrorist organization.*

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