The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia's Defense Ministry Says Syria '100% Free of Islamic State'

December 07, 2017



Russian Ministry of Defence Press Service

Russia's Defense Ministry said on Wednesday that Syria has been completely liberated from Islamic State (IS).

Russia entered the Syrian War in 2015 with a series of airstrikes that helped bolster Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Opposition groups and the U.S., which has disputed Russian claims that the war is drawing to a close, accuse the Kremlin of targeting civilian infrastructure including hospitals and mosques.

"All armed IS groups on Syrian territory have been destroyed, and the territory itself has been liberated," General Valery Gerasimov was cited as saying by the Defense Ministry's press service during his annual meeting with foreign military representatives.

Embed:

> .@mod_Russia has confirmed that Syria is now 100% free from ISIS terrorists. Mission accomplished! pic.twitter.com/serJIr7QiT
>
> — Russian Embassy, UK (@RussianEmbassy) December 6, 2017

The Syrian conflict entered a new phase this year when IS took a stand in the eastern city of Deir el-Zour, its last major stronghold in Syria. In recent weeks, the terrorist group banned in Russia has been ousted by the Syrian military, Kurdish militias and Russian forces.

President Vladimir Putin repeated the claim to journalists later on Wednesday, the Interfax news agency reported.

“Of course there may still be isolated hotbeds of resistance,” he said. “But overall, at this stage and in this territory, combat is over."

“I repeat,” the president added, “the terrorists have been defeated and destroyed.”

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