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Russia Accuses Islamic State of Running Online Casinos

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Vasily Nebenzya **Li Muzi / Zuma / TASS**

Islamic State (IS) is running online casinos to compensate for financial setbacks driven by battlefield losses, Russia's top diplomat at the United Nations has said.

Illicit oil trafficking and extortion have until recently been Islamic State's main sources of revenue. IS "has been forced to adapt" to military defeats and continues to pose an evolving threat, the UN's counterterrorism office reported at the Security Council.

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'They are honing their skills with modern technology,' Vasily Nebenzya, the head of Russia's UN mission, said at the Security Council meeting on Thursday.

'Caliphate fighters are not shying away from seeking revenue from online casinos,' Nebenzya said, citing a UN counterterrorism office's report.

The terrorist group's revenues from oil smuggling and extortion have dwindled to $2 million per month as of late last year, Nebenzya said. He estimated their overall monthly earnings at $3 million, a significant drop from peak earnings in 2015, when IS may have earned as much $500 million from oil sales.

Citing the counterterrorism report, Nebenzya charged that IS transfers its criminal revenues to 'solidly reputable bank accounts' in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia.

'All those who delivered direct or indirect assistance to IS, not to mention the fighters themselves, must be held to account," the Russian diplomat said.

IS is a terrorist organizaton banned in Russia.

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