

Russia's Military Police Announces Syria Frontline Patrols

October 23, 2019



Valery Matytsin / TASS

Russia's military police have launched patrols along the frontline in northeastern Syria where U.S. soldiers kept guard less than two weeks ago, its spokesperson told reporters Wednesday.

The announcement follows Russian and Turkish leaders' [agreement](#) to remove Kurdish fighters from the border and launch joint patrols along a "safe zone" long sought by Ankara. Syrian and Russian forces have already entered two border cities, Manbij and Kobani, which lie within Turkey's planned "safe zone" but are west of recent Turkish military operations.

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"The patrol route goes along the Syrian Arab Army's frontlines several kilometers from Qirat village on the Sajur River," Interfax [quoted](#) the Russian spokesman as saying.

He added that U.S. troops — pushed toward the Iraqi border after Turkey's offensive into Syria — patrolled the same area northeast of Manbij 10 days ago. The Sajur River forms a frontline between Turkish-backed and Kurdish forces.

Syrian regime forces, backed by Russia and Iran, have taken advantage of the power vacuum left by retreating U.S. troops to advance swiftly into the largest swath of territory previously outside their grasp.

Damascus had earlier reached a deal with Kurdish-led forces that it would deploy the Syrian army in border areas to help fend off the Turkish offensive.

The escalation has spawned a humanitarian crisis, with 160,000 civilians taking flight, as well as fears that thousands of detained Islamic State fighters in Kurdish jails may escape.

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