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U.S. Troops 'Block' Russian Soldiers in Syria

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The standoff took place two days after Kurdish forces reportedly prevented Russian troops from passing through a major city. **Sergei Novikov / TASS**

U.S. troops have "blocked" Russian soldiers from accessing an oilfield in northeast Syria, Turkey's Hurriyet Daily News outlet has reported, citing the state news agency Anadolu.

News of the standoff appeared two years after an incident in which anywhere from five to 200 Russian mercenaries were killed by U.S. airstrikes while attempting to take over a Syrian oil refinery. As of mid-December, U.S. forces were deployed at 11 bases and military posts in northeast Syria, including five in the province of Hasakah, four in Deir ez-Zor and two in Raqqa, Anadolu reported last month.

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U.S. troops stopped a Russian military patrol en route to an oilfield near the Hasakah region town of Rmelan on Saturday, Anadolu reported, citing unnamed local sources. The U.S.

soldiers reportedly asked Russian troops to return to the town of Amuda 100 kilometers to the west.

The standoff took place two days after Kurdish forces similarly prevented Russian troops from passing through a major city to establish a military zone near the Rmelan oilfield, the outlet reported.

No casualties were reported in either case.

Russian troops have taken over at least three other U.S. bases in northern Syria, filling a void left by U.S. President Donald Trump's withdrawal of U.S. troops in October.

Russia intervened in Syria in 2015 on the side of Syrian government forces in their campaign against rebels and jihadists. Moscow denies using military contractors in Syria and says any Russian civilians there are volunteers.

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