

U.S. Blocks Russian Convoy in Syria, Reports Say

February 03, 2020



Russian and U.S. forces have faced off in Syria's Hasakah region, an area rich in oil fields, several times in the past month. **U.S. Army Reserve photo by Spc. DeAndre Pierce / TASS**

U.S. troops have again blocked Russian military convoys in northeastern Syria, the latest in a series of standoffs as the powers vie for control of the oil-rich region, the Voice of America (VOA) broadcaster [reported](#) Friday.

Russian and U.S. forces have [faced off](#) in Syria's Hasakah region, an area rich in oil fields, several times in the past month. Both countries maintain bases in northeastern Syria.

Related article: [U.S. 'Intercepted' Russian General in Syria – State Dept](#)

A VOA reporter saw U.S. Humvees patrolling one of the two towns that, along with a highway, have become a dividing line after Turkey invaded northeastern Syria in October. The outlet did not report any injuries after the latest standoff.

While U.S. troops pulled out from nearby areas after Turkey's incursion, around 500 American troops remain in the area to protect oil fields and prevent the re-emergence of the Islamic State terrorist group, the U.S.-funded broadcaster reported.

“Verbal altercations took place between both forces and evolved into raising weapons,” the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group [said](#) of a similar standoff in the area earlier last week. It noted that Kurdish forces have stepped in as mediators between Russian and U.S. troops.

The countries' forces appear “a lot on these roads,” an unnamed resident of the town of al-Malikiyah told VOA.

“They have their own disputes. They block roads here and there,” the resident was quoted as saying Friday.

U.S. officials have described the series of incidents as Russian troops “always testing us.”

The two countries have experienced “hiccups” in their military deconfliction efforts in Syria, James Jeffrey, the U.S. special envoy for Syrian engagement and the anti-Islamic State coalition, [said](#) last month.

Russia has waged an air and sea campaign in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad since 2015 as Moscow's Middle East ally has grappled with a years-long civil war. The U.S.-led coalition deployed into the war-torn country in 2014.

Islamic State is a terrorist group banned in Russia.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/02/03/us-blocks-russian-convoy-in-syria-reports-say-a69131>