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Russia Arrests 19 Suspected Islamist Terrorists

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Federal Security Service / TASS

Russian security forces have detained 19 suspected radical Islamists accused of plotting attacks across southern Russia, Interfax reported Wednesday, citing the Federal Security Service (FSB).

The security operation took place in the Black Sea regions of Krasnodar, Crimea, Rostov and Karachayevo-Cherkessia. Authorities identified the suspects as members of Takfir wal-Hijra, a group that Russia banned as extremist in 2010.

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"The interregional extremist community's 'takfiri' ideology provides a theological justification toward [crimes against] 'infidels' including Muslims as well as the need to create a theocratic Islamic state called 'caliphate'," the FSB was quoted as saying.

The FSB said its officers seized a suicide belt, explosive devices and automatic weapons in the forest of the republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia.

Courts have sanctioned the arrests of 10 suspected leaders and members of the Islamist group, Interfax cited the FSB as saying.

A Rostov-on-Don court ordered four of the suspects to be held in pre-trial detention for two months, according to state-run TASS.

News of the latest security operation comes amid reports of Turkey arresting five Russian citizens attempting to cross the country through the Syrian border.

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