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Russia Repatriates 34 Orphans of IS Families From Syria

By AFP

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Children walk out of a building during the handover of orphaned children, whose parents were suspected of belonging to the Islamic State group, to a Russian delegation by Syrian Kurdish officials at the headquarters of the department for foreign affairs of the semi-autonomous Kurdish administration in Syria's northeastern city of Qamishli. **Delil Souleiman / AFP**

Kurdish authorities in northeast Syria on Sunday handed over 34 orphaned children, whose parents were suspected of belonging to the Islamic State group, to a Russian delegation to be repatriated.

An AFP correspondent in the city of Qamishli said the children aged between three and 14 were handed over to a delegation headed by the Russian president's envoy for children's rights, Anna Kuznetsova.

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Moscow has now repatriated at least 169 such children, Fener al-Kait of the Syrian Kurds' foreign affairs department told AFP on the sidelines of a handover ceremony.

He said other departures to the Russian Federation of orphaned children would follow from northeast Syria.

Moscow has also been repatriating children abandoned in Iraq since the collapse of the jihadists' "caliphate" straddling both Arab states.

Syria's Kurds have repeatedly urged the international community to repatriate foreign nationals held in crowded camps in northeast Syria.

Their calls have largely fallen on deaf ears with only limited numbers, mostly children, allowed to return home so far.

Islamic State is a terrorist group banned in Russia.

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