

Russian Troops Block U.S. Military Convoy in Syria

May 14, 2021



The Defense Ministry said it turned around six American MRAP-type armored vehicles that drove “along an uncoordinated route and without prior notice.” **Omat Haj Kadour / AFP**

Russian troops have blocked and turned around a U.S. military convoy in northeast Syria, the Russian military [said](#) Thursday, accusing it of violating deconfliction arrangements in the country.

The Russian Defense Ministry’s Syria reconciliation center said six American MRAP-type armored vehicles drove “along an uncoordinated route and without prior notice” in the Kurdish-held Syrian province of Hasakah.

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“A Russian military police patrol stopped the convoy and turned it in the opposite direction,” counter admiral Alexander Karpov, the reconciliation center’s deputy head, said in a statement.

The U.S. Defense Department declined to comment on the confrontation, with spokeswoman Jessica McNulty [telling](#) Russian state-run media it “has nothing to give you on the request.”

The statement followed a Pentagon inspector general report to U.S. Congress accusing the Russian military of [violating](#) the northeastern Syria deconfliction processes this year.

The report, cited by Newsweek last week, accused Russia of adding “an extra vehicle to pre-arranged patrols” and moving military transport and fighter aircraft into the country without prior notice.

With greater numbers and closer proximity to the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State, the document said Russia “seeks to harass and constrain U.S. forces with the ultimate goal of compelling U.S. forces to withdraw from northeastern Syria.”

Russia countered by accusing the U.S. of “[illegally](#)” deploying in Syria, saying its presence there was requested by the Syrian regime.

“So the U.S. does not have any right to criticize legitimate actions of the Russian Armed Forces,” the Russian Embassy in Washington tweeted on May 6.

The Russian military, which has been providing support to Damascus since 2015 in its decade-long civil war, has also announced the [expansion](#) of its naval and military bases in Syria.

The U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition was deployed in Syria that same year, which has led to multiple tense standoffs with Russian troops in recent years.

Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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