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Russia Says Bombing Anti-Government Forces in Syria

By AFP

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A picture taken from the area of New Aleppo shows smoke rising during clashes between jihadists and Syrian soldiers in the northern city of Aleppo on Nov. 29. Jihadists and their Turkish-backed allies took control of five districts of Syria's second city of Aleppo on Nov. 29, "without any significant pushback" from the Syrian military, a war monitor said. **Bakr Alkasem / AFP**

Russia's military said Friday that its Air Force had bombed anti-government forces in Syria to repel "extremists" that have launched a major offensive on the city of Aleppo, state news agencies reported.

Jihadists and their Turkish-backed allies reached Syria's second city on Friday, pressing a lightning offensive against forces of the Iranian- and Russian-backed government.

The fighting is some of the deadliest in years in Syria's civil war.

"The Russian Air Force is carrying out rocket-bomb attacks on the equipment and manpower

of illegal armed groups, control points, warehouses and artillery positions of terrorists," news agencies reported a spokesperson for the Defense Ministry's Reconciliation Center for Syria as saying.

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It claimed that 200 militants had been "destroyed" over the last 24 hours.

AFP could not verify that figure.

"The operation to repel the aggression of the extremists continues," said Oleg Ignasyuk, deputy head of the Russian reconciliation center, state media reported.

Moscow is Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad's most important military backer, having turned the tide of the civil war in his favor when it intervened in 2015.

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