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Militant groups split & clash in E. Ghouta, civilians seek shelter – Russian MoD

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12/03/2018



Militants groups holding Eastern Ghouta have begun fighting each other after one faction attempted to separate from the terrorists, the Russian military said. Civilians are seeking shelter and trying to escape street fighting.

The confrontations broke out a day after the Russian Defense Ministry demanded that the Failak Ar-Rahman group separated from Jabhat Al-Nusra terrorists, currently known as Jabhat Fateh Al-Sham. In exchange, the militants were offered safe passage out of the embattled suburb of Damascus.

*“Open fighting between the members of illegal armed units is underway in the streets, civilians are forced to seek shelter not to accidentally become victims of hostilities,”* Major General Vladimir Zolotukhin told reporters on Monday.

Read more [First group of 50+ civilians safely leaves E. Ghouta via humanitarian corridor – Russian MoD](#)



A Russia-backed ceasefire came into effect in Syria's Eastern Ghouta around two weeks ago, in order to allow humanitarian aid deliveries and the evacuation of civilians. Two humanitarian corridors were established in the areas of Muhayam al-Wafideen and Mlekha to provide for the safe passage of local civilians. Both passages have been constantly shelled by the militants, injuring and killing those who were trying to escape, according to Russian MoD and eyewitnesses.

The first group of 52 civilians, half of whom were children, managed to flee the militant-held Eastern Ghouta on Sunday. Their safe passage was secured by the Russian and the Syrian forces after they had held talks with the armed groups controlling the area.

The situation in the militant-held enclave remains "*tense*," according to Zolotukhin. They also continued the bombardment of Damascus and its suburbs, firing seven mortar shells on Sunday, the official added. No one was injured in the attacks.

Despite the provocations, the humanitarian operations went on, the Russian military said. The spokesman reiterated that the safe routes in Eastern Ghouta remain open to both civilians and militants who are willing to flee.