Syrian opposition faction: Russia is bombing civilians, not ISIS

January 19, 2016

By Maayan Groisman

The Jerusalem Post

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/ISIS-Threat/Syrian-opposition-faction-Russia-is-bombing-civilians-not-ISIS-442015>

Bottom of Form

A prominent Syrian opposition faction is challenging Russia’s claims that a well-documented air strike it carried out in Syria targeted ISIS positions, claiming instead that the attack targeted civilians unconnected to the terrorist group.

New video released by the media institution of Ahrar al-Sham, one of the largest Syrian opposition groups, presents ostensible evidence of the Russian bombardment of Syrian civilians.

The video, released on January 18 and titled “Who is the target?” tells the story of an industrial warehouse in Idlib, a rebel-held governorate, bombed on October 3 by the Russian Air Force. The Russian Defense Ministry claimed that the site served as a munitions depot for ISIS and announced that airplanes and ammunition were destroyed in the attack, as reported by the Russian news channel RT.

However, the video released by the Syrian opposition group refutes these claims and presents a contradictory version of the attack, according to which, it was not ISIS munition depots that were destroyed, but a poultry farm used as shelter by refugees who fled from Assad's air strikes.

According to Kadour al-Zeem, the owner of a poultry farm who witnessed the bombardment, a six-year old girl living in the farm was killed as a result of the Russian air strike, while his daughter was injured.

Speaking about the bombardment, al-Zeem says furiously: "We were seven families living in this poultry farm, breeding chicks. They claim that we are terrorists and there is a military camp here! Can you see such a thing? There is no camp here. We are civilians; we escaped from Syrian air strikes to suffer from Russian air strikes. Where can we go?"

Al-Zeem’s comments summarize well the tragedy of Syrian refugees who fled from territories controlled by the Syrian regime to rebel-held territories but found themselves targeted once again, this time by the Russian Air Force.

The well-produced video, which includes English subtitles, appears to be Ahrar al-Sham’s answer to a video released by the Russian Defense Ministry on October 4, following the bombardment, presenting the ostensible ISIS positions that were attacked.