**Activists: At least 17 killed in east Syria airstrikes**

September 11, 2017

By AP

<https://apnews.com/977e1171acce4d859678f36466815a0e>

Syrian activists say at least 17 civilians have been killed in a series of airstrikes on a Euphrates River crossing in eastern Syria.

Omar Abou Leila of the monitoring group DeirEzzor 24 says Russian jets struck on Sunday ferries waiting to transport passengers across the river in the Islamic State group-held town of al-Baloul, 27 kilometers (17 miles) east of the contested city of Deir el-Zour.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights puts the toll at 21 civilians killed. It says the Russian air force is responsible. It was not immediately possible to independently confirm the claim.

Russian-backed government forces and U.S.-backed non-government forces are in a race to claim the IS-held river valley, and the surrounding energy resources and nearby crossing to Iraq.