

Al-Nusra 'not priority' , State Department says as terror group shells civilians in Syria

rt.com/usa/363563-alnusra-allepo-state-department/



US military efforts in Syria are not directed against Al-Nusra, the State Department said, acknowledging that the terrorist group is a “spoiler” in the efforts to establish a humanitarian ceasefire in Aleppo and beyond.

Acknowledging that Nusra was a designated terrorist organization not included in the cessation of hostilities agreement between the US and Russia, State Department spokesman John Kirby said the US-led coalition against Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL or Daesh) has not hit Nusra targets apart from one or two occasions.

Read more

“Unilaterally, when we’ve had information that led us to take action, because of the plotting we knew that they were doing, we did that,” Kirby said.

The US strategy to deal with the group, however, was to establish a Joint Implementation Center with Russia under the terms of the September 9 cessation of hostilities agreement, *“by which we would share information with the Russian military designed specifically to cooperate against Al-Nusra,”* Kirby said.



This week, Russia [paused](#) its joint offensive with Syrian government troops on eastern Aleppo, which is held by an assortment of armed groups, including Al-Nusra Front, an Al-Qaeda offshoot. The goal is to allow people wishing to leave the city to do so, including both civilians and

militants, who were offered separate corridors to leave Aleppo with their arms.

On Thursday, however, the militants opened fire on civilian evacuation routes, injuring three Russian officers at the EI-Masharka government checkpoint, the Russian Center for Reconciliation said.

Kirby's claim that the US wanted to set up the JIC to work with Russia against Al-Nusra contradicted his own words from September 16, when he said that the establishment of such a center would be contingent on humanitarian aid reaching Aleppo.

"We don't have any intention of having an intelligence sharing agreement with the Russians," Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, told the US Senate on September 20.