Beat: News

Rebels shoot down military helicopter in eastern Syria, killing 8

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USPA News - Eight Syrian service members were killed late Sunday evening when anti-government forces shot down a military helicopter in the country`s eastern region, activists said on Monday. State-run media did not immediately report on the crash.

The incident happened late Sunday when rebel fighters from the Abu Bakir Islamist brigade fired at a military helicopter from the 137th battalion, according to the Britain-based activist group Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. It happened in the eastern province of Deir ez-Zor which borders Iraq. "Rebel fighters from the Abu Bakir Islamist brigade shot down a military helicopter tonight, killing the eight regular fighters who were in the helicopter, including two officers," the group said in a statement on early Monday morning. It was not possible to independently verify the report. A video supplied by the group showed a group of rebels standing in front of what appears to be the helicopter`s wreckage. One man in the video briefly speaks, saying government troops were killed in the crash, before the camera shifts to a nearby pickup truck in which at least several bodies are visible. The crisis in Syria began as a pro-democracy protest movement in March 2011, similar to those across the Middle East and North Africa. The Syrian government violently cracked down on the protests, setting off an armed conflict between pro-Assad forces and anti-government forces. A number of jihadist groups have since joined the fight against Assad`s regime. The United Nations estimates that more than 70,000 people, many of them civilians, have been killed and more than 1.3 million others have fled to neighboring countries since the start of the uprising in 2011. Opposition groups estimate the number of deaths is far higher, but those figures cannot be independently verified.

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