

Syrian rebels launch 'drone attack' on Russian airbase in Latakia

A drone launched by Syrian rebels has dropped bombs on a Russian airbase in western Syria, the second such attack on the Latakia airport in two weeks.

A Russian airbase in western Syria was targeted by opposition fighters for the second time in two weeks on Saturday, as rebels to bomb the military site with drones.

No deaths or material damage were recorded in the attempted attack on Hmeimem airbase, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, with the drone shot down close to the airport in Latakia province.

"Islamic factions" were responsible for the attempted air raid, the observatory said. Images on social media appear to show rebel fighters attaching explosives to a rudimentary drone.

Opposition media had reported that the "Free Alawite Army" had claimed responsibility for the 24 December attack on the airbase, although it is not certain if the group exists.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's family belong to Alawite branch of Islam, who mostly reside in Latakia province.

Syrian rebels are based in the regime-held province, mostly around the eastern Jebel Akrad mountains, and have launched missile and artillery attacks on Latakia city.

Images of the 24 December missile attack have been shared by BBC, which showed damage to aircraft at the Hmeimem airbase and reportedly left a number of bombers and helicopters inoperable. Two Russian servicemen were killed in the attack, the defense ministry said.

Russia has reportedly ramped up its defenses at the Latakia airbase since the attack.

Hmeimem has been the launchpad for fierce bombing on rebel areas since Russia entered the war in September 2015.

Russian aircraft have helped Syrian regime troops in Hama as they have advanced towards the opposition Idlib province.

Moscow has also been blamed for a devastating attack on an Idlib village close to the Turkish border. Images show Taffahiyah reduced to rubble.

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<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/1/7/syrian-rebels-launch-drone-attack-on-russian-airbase>

