

Meet Syrian Rebel Commander Who Bragged about Killing Russian Su-24 Pilot

By [Sputnik](#)

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The downing of the Russian Su-24 bomber cast the spotlight on Syrian Turkmen rebels and particularly Alparslan Celik, who boasted of killing the pilots of the aircraft which took part in Moscow's counterterrorism campaign in Syria.

It was Celik, the second-in-command of the Turkmen Coastal Division, who confirmed that militants fired at the two Russian pilots as they were descending to the ground. He also claimed that both were killed, although this allegation was later disproved.

"Both of the pilots were retrieved dead. Our comrades opened fire into the air and they died in the air," he told reporters shortly after the incident took place, showing what appeared to be a piece of a parachute as proof.

Celik, according to RT, is not a Turkmen but a Turkish national, who appears to be a son of the mayor of Keban, a small town in the province of Elazig. Celik is also said to be a member of the Grey Wolves, a youth organization often described as ultranationalist or neo-fascist.

The Grey Wolves "have tried to export their Pan-Turkish ideology and Neo-fascist propaganda to other countries like Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, to reunite all the Turkic people, but have been banned. The reason for the ban is simple: the Grey Wolves have been responsible for a series of crimes, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. Members of the organisation have killed hundreds of people in Turkey, and their willingness to resort to violence has always been pretty obvious," International Business Times reported in June.

The organization is linked to the far-right The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), the third party in the country. The MHP received nearly 12 percent of the vote in the latest parliamentary elections held in November.

On Tuesday, a Turkish F-16 shot down a Su-24, claiming that the aircraft had violated its airspace. Russian officials and the Su-24 pilot, who survived the crash, insist that the plane did not cross into Turkey. The crew, according to the pilot, did not receive any warning prior to the attack.

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