

How Chechen female con artists duped Islamic State recruiters of \$3,000

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Moscow: Turning the tables on Islamic State online recruiters, three Chechen girls allegedly swindled over \$3,000 by coning them into giving money on the pretence that they would use it to travel to Syria from their homeland.

Chechen police have detained the three female con artists who talked fighters of the terrorist group Islamic State into sending them money for travelling to Syria. The young women turned the tables on Islamic State by using their primary recruitment tool, social media, against them.

Russia's predominantly Muslim Chechen Republic is a prime target for Islamic State propagandists, who call on young men and women to join their cause and travel to the Middle East to join their jihadist campaign. However, the Chechen girls made a business of meeting recruiters online and pretending to be eager to go to Syria.

The only obstacle, they said, was the lack of travel money, which the recruiters were often willing to provide, RT News reported. Once the money was sent via anonymous electronic transfers, the swindlers would simply cash the money and delete the social media account used in the con, it said.

The three-girl operation managed to swindle some \$3,300 from Islamic State recruiters before being caught by a Chechen police E unit specialising in monitoring online activities for evidence of crimes, Russian daily Moskovsky Komsomolets reported. "I don't recall any precedent like this one in Chechnya, probably because nobody digs deep enough in that direction," Valery Zolotaryov of the E unit told the newspaper. "Anyhow, I don't advise anyone to communicate with dangerous criminals, especially for grabbing quick money," she said.

The young women may have exploited IS in this case, but mostly it happens the other way around. Even one of the Chechen swindlers was considering taking up the offer and going to Syria rather than pulling out, she told LifeNews. "Many people I know did go, but I know no one for whom it turned out well," she said.

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