

Syria conflict: Russian jets 'bomb refugee camp on Jordan border'

13/07/2016 21:13 by admin

At least eight people were killed when jets believed to be Russian bombed a Syrian refugee camp on the border with Jordan on Tuesday, activists say.

Video footage - showed rebels reacting to the strike, as smoke rises in the distance

Dozens more were injured when tents at Hammad, a remote desert area, were struck around noon (09:00 GMT).

Most of the casualties were reportedly families of members of a rebel group known as the Eastern Lions, which is fighting so-called Islamic State (IS).

There was no immediate comment from Russia, which backs Syria's government.

However, a senior Western diplomat told the Reuters news agency that initial information suggested Russian aircraft carried out the raid.

Last month, Russian jets twice attacked another Syrian rebel group's base in the border town of Tanf, to the north-east.

'Cluster munitions'

Said Seif, a local activist, told the Local Co-ordination Committees (LCC) network that cluster munitions were used in Tuesday's air raid on the makeshift camp at Hammad. At least 15 people were killed and 40 others wounded, he said.

Another activist, Ahmed al-Maslameh, put the death toll at eight, the Associated Press reported.

A Jordanian source told the Reuters news agency that Jordanian army troops based on the border helped rush the injured to hospitals inside the kingdom.

Mr Seif said almost 350 refugee families from eastern Syria, most of them relatives of rebel fighters, had been living at the camp, located inside the "no-man's-land" between the Syrian and Jordanian sides of the border.

It is also close to the far larger refugee camp at Hadalat, where tens of thousands of Syrians have been stranded for months because the Jordanian authorities have been restricting the number permitted to enter on security grounds.

More than 100,000 Syrian refugees are stranded in tented camps on the Jordanian border

The refugees at Hadalat and at the other major camp, to the north-east at Rukban, have been running out of food since Jordan declared the border a closed military zone following an IS suicide truck bomb attack on 21 June which killed six security personnel.

On Tuesday, the United Nations said the Jordanian government had agreed to a one-off aid delivery for the 100,000 people thought to be at the two camps.

"We have negotiated with the government for an intervention... to create packages that will include food as well as non-food items," the executive director of the UN's World Food Programme, Ertharin Cousin, told the AFP news agency.

"But the Jordanian government has been very clear with us it is a one-time intervention," she added.

Jordanian officials have asserted that the camps have become "enclaves" for IS militants and that "national security must take precedence".

- BBC