

Russia officials wary of terrorist groups

by UPI

MOSCOW -- International terrorist groups made several attempts to set up operations in south-central Russia, a Russian counterintelligence official said Monday. Nikolai Patrushev, the director of Russia's Federal Security Service, said the groups Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan made "repeated attempts" to move their operations into the Urals region of Russian near Kazakhstan, RIA Novosti reported. Hizb ut-Tahrir calls itself a pan-Islamist political party seeking to establish an Islamic state in Central Asia. Though the United States doesn't recognize the group as a foreign terrorist organization, Russia officials connected the group with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and other groups operating in Chechnya. Patrushev told RIA Novosti that investigations uncovered more than 80 members working the Urals region and noted the number of terror-related crimes in the region is up from 2007 levels. He also urged greater effort on the counter-terrorism front ahead of a summit with Russia and EU officials scheduled for June.

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