

Beat: Miscellaneous

American jihadist killed in Syria while fighting for Islamic State

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USPA News - An American citizen fighting for the Islamic State was killed by Syrian rebels over the weekend, U.S. officials confirmed late on Tuesday, making him the first American citizen known to have been killed while fighting for the al-Qaeda splinter group. Photographs which emerged on Tuesday showed a passport and the body of 33-year-old Douglas McAuthor McCain, who is from San Diego in California.

He was among at least seven Islamic State fighters who were killed in Syria by rebels belonging to the Free Syrian Army (FSA), which has fought for years to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad. "We were aware of U.S. citizen Douglas McAuthor McCain's presence in Syria and can confirm his death," said U.S. National Security Council (NSC) spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden. "We continue to use every tool we possess to disrupt and dissuade individuals from traveling abroad for violent jihad and to track and engage those who return." The confirmation makes McCain the first American citizen known to have been killed while fighting for the Islamic State, but U.S. officials believe dozens more are in Syria to fight alongside the group of jihadists, which declared itself an Islamic caliphate earlier this year after seizing much of northeastern Syria and making huge gains in parts of Iraq. Jen Psaki, a spokeswoman for the U.S. State Department, said the department was in contact with McCain's family and providing all possible consular assistance. "Certainly out of respect for the family we're not going to be adding any more comment at this time," she added. Tuesday's news came hours after U.S. President Barack Obama said the United States will continue to take "direct action where needed" to protect American citizens from the Islamic State (IS/ISIS/ISIL). "Rooting out a cancer like ISIL won't be easy and it won't be quick," he said. "But tyrants and murderers before them should recognize that kind of hateful vision ultimately is no match for the strength and hopes of people who stand together for the security and dignity and freedom that is the birthright of every human being."

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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