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## Syria rebels seize key checkpoint near Aleppo airport: NGO



Syrian rebels seized a key army checkpoint near Aleppo airport on Monday as they fought with troops to control several airports in the north, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported.

“The rebels seized a checkpoint several hundred meters (yards) away from Nayrab military airport,” on the road leading to Aleppo international airport, Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahman told AFP.

Rebels also clashed with troops along the airport road, he added.

A military source in Aleppo speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity said that later Monday the rebels tried but failed to raid the international airport’s fuel storage warehouse.

“The army fought off the raid,” said the source, adding that clashes broke out just 200 meters (yards) away from the airport and were “very fierce.”

The advance is the latest in a series by the rebels since they captured last week air bases at Al-Jarrah, Hassel and Base 80, also in Aleppo province.

On February 12, rebels launched a battle to capture the main air base and international airport in Aleppo province, in a bid to stall the air force’s deadly firepower and to capture ammunition from its warehouses.

The rebels are trying to capture the international airport, which has been closed since January 1.

The Syrian army, meanwhile, is preparing to “cleanse” in the next 48 hours insurgent-held areas in the strategic northern province, the pro-regime Watan newspaper reported.

Troops were now focused on “putting a stop to battles taking place around Base 80” which is tasked with

“The army should impose its control on Base 80 (after) cleansing areas seized by armed men,” it said, adding that “the security situation in Aleppo is improving.”

Near the capital, rebels stormed an intelligence bureau in the town of Nabuk, killing at least eight officials there.

Rebels also overran a checkpoint in southern Daraa province, freeing up a road leading to Jordan, said the Britain-based monitoring group, adding that the border post is still in regime hands.

At least 122 people were killed in violence across the country on Sunday, said the Observatory.

Syria’s nearly two-year conflict has left more than 70,000 people dead, the U.N. says.