

Egypt says no survivors from Russian plane crash



More than 200 passengers and crew aboard a Russian airliner flying from the popular tourist resort Sharm el-Sheikh have died after it crashed in the Sinai desert.

The flight, operated by Metrojet and bound for St Petersburg, lost contact with air traffic control 23 minutes after departure. Its wreckage was found about 100km (60 miles) south of the north Sinai town of El-Arish, Egyptian officials said.

A north Sinai security source said a technical fault was the initial explanation for the crash, adding that the plane landed in a “vertical fashion”.

The first rescue workers at the scene described the plane as “completely destroyed” and an Egyptian security officer told Reuters that many passengers had died strapped in to their seats.

“The plane split into two, a small part on the tail end that burned and a larger part that crashed into a rock. We have extracted at least 100 bodies and the rest are still inside,” he said.

The Russian embassy in Cairo said it was told by Egyptian officials that the pilot had been trying to make an emergency landing at El-Arish.

Conflicting reports earlier emerged, with suggestions that there were some survivors after voices were heard in the wreckage of the plane’s cabin. Egyptian search and rescue officials said later that all 224 on board, including 17 children, died.

Airbus said the A321-200 that crashed was 18 years old, had made almost 21,000 flights and accrued about 56,000 flight hours. It had been operated by the Russian airline since 2012.

Kogalymavia, which owns Metrojet, said there were “no grounds” to blame the incident on human error. Russian state media reported that the crew had complained to officials earlier this week about the state of the plane, claiming it should not be flown due to technical issues.

“This aircraft appealed to the technical service in connection with engine start failure several times over the past week before this,” a source told the RIA agency.

The plane, which had a tail number of EI-ETJ, lost contact 23 minutes after takeoff while flying at more than 30,000 feet above sea level, [according to the plane tracker website Flight Radar](#). It had begun to make a steep descent at a rate of 6,000 feet per minute shortly before communications were lost.

Russia's aviation authority, Rosaviatsia, said flight 7K9268 failed to make scheduled contact with Cyprus air traffic control and disappeared from the radar.

Russian president Vladimir Putin expressed his deepest condolences to the families of victims of the crash.

The last major commercial plane crash in [Egypt](#) happened in 2004, when a Flash Airlines Boeing 737 plunged into the Red Sea after taking off from Sharm el-Sheikh. The 148 people on board that flight, most of whom were French, were killed.

Millions of people, many of them Russian, visit the resort – one of Egypt's major tourist draws – every year.

Probe of Russian Plane Crash in Egypt's Sinai Points to Breakup in Flight

Tail debris located separate from rest of aircraft By

Wall Street Journal, Andy Pasztor in Los Angeles, Dahlia Kholaf in Cairo and Robert Wall in London, Updated Nov. 2, 2015 7:21 a.m. ET



The [Russian passenger jet](#) that crashed in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula with 224 people on board broke apart in flight and debris from the tail section was found separate from the rest of the fuselage, suggesting that section may have split off in the air, according to people familiar with the investigation.

Russian authorities suggested the cause of Saturday's crash was likely mechanical failure, though it was too early to draw a firm conclusion.

The midair breakup left debris scattered over approximately eight square miles, the head of the Russian-led Interstate Aviation Committee, Viktor Sorochenko, said Sunday.

The plane had suffered substantial damage in 2001 when the tail struck the runway on landing in Cairo, according to the Flight Safety Foundation's Aviation Safety Network. That event has captured the attention of safety experts and investigators given that the tail-section debris was located apart from the rest of the plane, according to two people knowledgeable about early steps of the investigation.

After climbing gradually to more than 33,000 feet, the jet dropped some 6,000 feet in about 22 seconds, according to preliminary radar data posted Saturday by a commercial website. In roughly 60 seconds, the data show the plane's speed dropping to about 100 miles per hour, slower than the forward speed needed to continue safe flight. According to the data, which hasn't been confirmed by investigators, the plane had been cruising at roughly 460 miles per hour.

Both of the plane's black boxes, which record flight data, were recovered on Saturday, said Mohamed Rahma, a spokesman for Egypt's civil aviation ministry.

"It's too early to speak of conclusions," Mr. Sorochenko told journalists in Cairo after inspecting the crash site, according to Russian state news agencies. "The breakup happened in the air."

The Airbus A321, operated by Russian carrier Kogalymavia, was flying to St. Petersburg, Russia, from the Egyptian resort of Sharm El Sheikh in Sinai, a popular destination for Russian tourists. Several airlines suspended flights over Sinai until more is known about the cause of the crash. United Arab Emirates budget carriers flydubai and Air Arabia said Sunday they were rerouting flights after [Air France-KLM](#), [Deutsche Lufthansa](#) AG and Emirates Airline said they were avoiding the Sinai region.

The Egyptian affiliate of Islamic State, which is known as Sinai Province and is active in the restive peninsula, claimed responsibility for downing the plane and said it was in response to Russia's intervention in the Syrian war on the side of the regime. Syria's Shiite-linked regime, which is backed by Iran, is fighting the Sunni extremists of Islamic State among other foes.

Islamic State and its affiliates have frequently made exaggerated claims, and Russian officials said they doubted whether the group has the capabilities to carry out such an attack.

U.S. and European air safety officials, who had previously [warned airliners about the threat of anti-aircraft weapons in the region](#), believe flying above 26,000 feet is safe. The Russian plane was above 30,000 feet when it appears to have broken up.