

# Cargo Plane Crash Kills 11 in Pakistan

By [Ashraf Khan](#)

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Soldiers inspecting the crash site of a Ukrainian-piloted Il-76, which hit unfinished buildings in Karachi on Sunday. **Fareed Khan**

KARACHI, Pakistan — A cargo plane crashed in flames into a residential area in Pakistan's largest city soon after takeoff Sunday, killing all eight crew members and at least three people on the ground, officials said.

The crash was the second this month in Karachi, the main port city in the south, and the third in Pakistan in less than five months.

The Russian-made plane slammed into a housing complex under construction in Karachi, sending fire and smoke into the sky and damaging about 20 buildings. The aircraft narrowly missed several large occupied apartment buildings only a few hundred meters away.

Authorities recovered three bodies from the smoking rubble by Sunday afternoon and one worker was still missing, Navy Commodore Mohammad Musra said. Another person on the ground was hospitalized with severe burns, local doctor Abdul Razak said.

The Sudan-bound plane crashed at about 1:50 a.m., when many people in the upscale neighborhood were asleep. One of the plane's engines was on fire as it flew overhead, several witnesses said.

"I saw one of its wings was burning, and there was a blast, and the fire engulfed the aircraft very quickly," Riaz Ahmed said.

Residents said most of the houses destroyed were under construction and believed to be unoccupied except for a few of the laborers building them.

Karachi police chief Fayaz Leghari said a larger catastrophe had narrowly been averted.

"It would have been a big disaster had the plane hit the residential apartments," Leghari said.

Aviation authority spokesman Pervais George said the plane came down two minutes after takeoff from the city's international airport. He said the eight crew members were dead.

Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesman Oleksander Dykusharov said seven Ukrainians were among the crew, including the commander, pilot and navigator. He told Interfax that the information was provided by the plane's owner, Georgian firm Sunway Airlines.

George initially identified the crew as Russians, but another Pakistani aviation official, Mukhtar Ahmad, later said that the nationalities and identities of the eight on board had not been confirmed.

Many people initially thought that the blast was from a bomb, a regular event in Pakistan.

"I was sleeping, and the huge blast awoke me. I thought some suicide attack might have occurred, and I ran outside," Rehan Hashmi said.

Fire trucks sprayed foam onto the crash site, and after two hours the blaze was extinguished.

Hundreds of people came to see the spectacle and film it with their mobile phones, hampering access for emergency workers.

Most of the housing complex was reserved for naval officers and their families.

George said the plane was an Ilyushin Il-76, a multipurpose cargo plane that is often used for ferrying humanitarian aid to developing countries, as well as other large items.

Earlier this month in Karachi, a small passenger plane crashed soon after takeoff, killing 21 people. In July, a passenger jet operated by Pakistani carrier Airblue crashed into hills overlooking the capital, Islamabad, during stormy weather, killing all 152 on board.

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