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New Check Sought Into Yaroslavl Crash

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A group of victims' relatives are demanding a new investigation into the plane crash that wiped out Yaroslavl's elite hockey team in September.

Family members remain unconvinced by the findings of the official investigation, which placed the blame for the crash on pilot error, and will ask the Investigative Committee and the Defense Ministry to open a new probe, Izvestia reported on Monday.

Experts hired by the families say mechanical failure and an unexplained powering down of the engines could have caused the crash, which killed 44, including 37 members of the Yaroslavl Lokomotiv team.

"They blamed the dead pilots ... but they didn't identify the cause of the crash," said the relatives' lawyer Igor Trunov.

He also said the Interstate Aviation Commission — which investigates plane crashes and certifies the flight readiness of civilian aircraft — has a conflict of interest that makes its experts reluctant to blame mechanical failure.

A civilian court could order military investigators to take up the case, an unnamed source in the Defense Ministry's department of aviation safety said.

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