

# Ravine Scoured for Superjet's Missing Black Box

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A group of women pose in front of the Superjet that crashed last week, killing all 45 people on board.

Indonesian special forces and professional climbers scaled down a treacherous ravine on a volcano face Sunday in search of a missing flight recorder that could explain the deadly crash of a Sukhoi Superjet 100.

The Jakarta Post, citing a Saturday interview with a spokesman for the Indonesian search and rescue agency, reported that a flight recorder had been found. But officials said Sunday that the search was continuing and they hoped that information stored on the black box would explain what caused the crash about halfway through a planned 50-minute flight.

The airliner was carrying 45 people, including eight Russians, when it crashed into Mount Salak on Wednesday during a flight intended to woo potential Indonesian airline buyers.

All aboard are presumed dead, and helicopters have been ferrying the victims' remains to Jakarta, the capital, for identification since Saturday.

At least 20 plastic containers with fragments of bodies have been recovered, though the exact number of victims recovered was not known, search and rescue official Madya Daryatmo said, Interfax reported. The pilots' remains were also found Saturday, hanging in a tree.

Indonesia's government has appointed six teams composed of 60 experts in forensics, fingerprinting, and DNA analysis in order to identify the victims, the Jakarta Post reported.

Autopsies could take weeks, months or even years given that the remains were not intact and decomposition had already begun, said Anton Castilani, head of the national police's disaster victim identification unit.

Indonesian officials will analyze the flight recorder if it is found, National Search and Rescue Agency spokesman Gagah Prakoso told the Jakarta Post. Russia's ambassador to Indonesia confirmed this to the Jakarta Post. Transportation Minister Evert Erenst Mangindaan was quoted as saying Russian investigators would let Indonesian authorities take the lead in the investigation because "they want it to be transparent."

Russian specialist teams arrived over the weekend to assist in the operation, including rescuers, psychologists, medical experts, and investigators, RIA-Novosti reported. The rescuers from the Emergency Situations Ministry have been trained in mountain-climbing techniques and have the necessary equipment to work in the tough terrain around the crash site.

✉(MT, AP)

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