Russian Plane Catches Fire During Czech Republic Landing

May 23, 2012

The burned remains of the An-30 after a mishap in the Czech Republic.

A Russian An–30 military jet caught fire at an airport in the Czech town of Chaslav, after the plane suffered a malfunction with its landing gear. No one was killed, but most of the passengers were injured.

The accident occurred just before noon following an observation flight by the plane, which had citizens of the Czech Republic and Russia on board, Interfax reported, citing Czech news site Pravo.

Six of the 23 passengers were hospitalized with injuries sustained in the fire, the Defense Ministry said in a statement. One person had unspecified severe injuries, the statement said.

An emergency services spokesman told Pravo that nine people had been hospitalized and six others treated for injuries at the scene of the accident.

The plane appeared to have landed in a field, not on a runway, according to images from a

report on the website of Zvezda television.

No structures on the ground were damaged in the hard landing, the Defense Ministry statement said.

A special commission has been created to investigate the incident, the statement said.

The flight was being undertaken as part of the Treaty on Open Skies, a "mutual aerial observation" agreement between 34 countries in Europe and North America.

Since the treaty went into effect in 2002, more than 800 flights have been taken under its auspices, with Wednesday's An-30 accident becoming the first mishap for flights performed as part of the agreement.