

5 Killed in Ukraine Crash-Landing

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A law enforcement officer standing Thursday near the crash-landed An-24 turboprop at the Donetsk airport.

KIEV, Ukraine — A passenger plane carrying football fans headed for a match skidded past the landing strip and overturned in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk on Wednesday evening, killing five people and injuring nine, officials said.

The small, Soviet-designed An-24 passenger plane with 52 people on board crash-landed during a scheduled arrival at Donetsk airport from the Black Sea port of Odessa. It hit the ground between two landing strips, broke into two parts and caught fire.

The head of South Airlines, which operated the flight, told a local television station he believed that the pilot should not have landed due to heavy fog. But one survivor reported engine failure, while a student pilot said one of the engines caught fire after the plane hit the ground.

One of the survivors, a man in his 20s who identified himself by his first name, Oleg, said in a

video interview posted on the Ukrainian news site Korrespondent that the plane "split open" and caught fire during landing. Many of the passengers escaped the burning plane through the hole that emerged as a result.

Oleg said that according to preliminary information, the crash could have been caused by engine failure during landing.

"It was horrible," said Oleg, visibly shaken. "This situation needs to be dealt with."

He and regional officials said the plane was filled mostly with football fans heading for the Wednesday night Champions League match between Ukraine's Shakhtar and Borussia Dortmund. The match opened with a minute of silence in memory of the dead.

In recent years, former Soviet republics have had some of the world's worst air-safety records. Experts blame that record on the age of the aircraft, weak government controls, poor pilot training and a cost-cutting mentality.

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