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Human Remains Found at Helicopter Crash Site

By The Moscow Times

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A television screen grab showing a rescue worker carrying a part of the crash Mi-8 helicopter to shore.

Rescue workers said Wednesday that they have found human remains and the flight recorder at the crash site of an Mi-8 helicopter that went down in eastern Siberia this week.

All nine people who were aboard the aircraft are believed to have died.

After inspecting the 250-square-meter crash site, rescuers have collected about 50 body parts and 15 fragments of the helicopter, said the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry.

Ministry spokesman Oleg Voronov said the helicopter's black box also had been found at the site near the Nizhnyaya Tunguska River in the Irkutsk region, RIA-Novosti reported.

Investigators were working at the crash site Wednesday.

A TV screen grab showing rescue workers traveling to the crash site. (Rossia-24).

The search is complicated by difficult terrain, the rising waters of the Nizhnyaya Tunguska river and the relatively wide area over which the debris is scattered.

The search operation and the investigation of the incident is being conducted by 148 people with four helicopters and two aircraft, as well as a hovercraft and two boats.

Earlier, the Investigative Committee said identification of the bodies found at the crash site would require DNA testing, which is to be performed shortly.

Investigators are considering several possible causes of the crash, including bad weather, pilot error and the unsafe transportation of explosions, which were being used to blast thick ice from the surface of rivers.

The Mi-8 helicopter carrying six passengers and three crew members lost radio contact with ground control at 4 p.m. Monday en route from Kirensk to a remote settlement in the taiga.

The helicopter was carrying the acting head of the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry, the chief regional civil defense engineer and several emergency workers.

The helicopter had 1,920 kilograms of explosives on board when crashed 6 kilometers short of its destination.

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