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21 Killed in Helicopter Crash, Official Says

By The Moscow Times

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YAKUTSK — Twenty-one people were killed when an Mi-8 helicopter crash landed Tuesday in the Siberian republic of Sakha, an official said Tuesday.

The helicopter, which belongs to the Polyarnye Avialinii airline, was on a routine passenger transport flight when it failed to establish contact with air controllers at the designated time.

The chopper had 28 people on board, including three crew members and 11 children. An unidentified government official told Interfax that 21 people were killed in the crash; no official announcement about casualties was made.

The helicopter crash-landed 50 kilometers from its starting point — an airfield near the village of Deputatsky — after the pilots reportedly lost control of the aircraft due to severe turbulence.

Regional investigators have opened a criminal case on grounds of violation of safety procedures resulting in the death of two or more people.

Material from The Moscow Times is included in this report.

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