

Victims of Helicopter Crash Were Preparing Fishing Trip for Putin, Report Says

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The Mi-8 helicopter crashed into a lake in northern Russia.

Officials aboard a helicopter that crashed into an Arctic lake, killing more than a dozen people, were preparing a fishing trip for President Vladimir Putin, a news report said.

Divers had retrieved 12 bodies by Monday morning from the Munozero Lake, where the Mi-8 helicopter crashed Saturday, Itar-Tass reported.

An unidentified regional official told local Flash Nord news agency that the expedition was preparing a fishing trip for Putin, who had been expected to arrive in Murmansk "in the coming days." The report could not be independently confirmed.

Putin is known to enjoy recreational fishing in the Arctic, and told the U.S. Outdoor Life magazine in 2011 that some of the "best fishing in the world" was in the Murmansk region.

Murmansk administration spokesman Denis Pushin had initially told Flash Nord that

the helicopter was taking officials on a "private" trip. But Andrei Guryev, the director of the PhosAgro company — a subsidiary of fertilizer producer Apatit that owned the helicopter — denied the report, saying the mission was to inspect the area as part of program to develop fishing tourism, Flash Nord reported.

The Murmansk region has declared Monday a day of mourning, Pushin told Interfax.

Between 17 and 19 people were aboard the helicopter, according to conflicting reports cited by Interfax, including several senior officials.

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[16 Missing After Helicopter Crash in Northern Russia](#)

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