

Russian Plane Seized in Nigeria 'Belongs to French Peacekeeping Mission'

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The aircraft took off in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, and was headed to the Chadian capital N'Djamena, Reuters reported.

Military cargo found in a Russian aircraft that got widespread media attention over the weekend after being seized by Nigerian authorities belongs to a French peacekeeping mission, the Russian Embassy in Nigeria claimed Sunday.

The aircraft, which was allegedly in the process of transporting military equipment, made an unauthorized landing at Nigeria's Kano Airport on Saturday, Reuters reported.

"The plane that is being held [by Nigerian authorities] in the city of Kano is Russian, but its military cargo belongs to a French peacekeeping mission," TASS quoted Artyom Romanov, the press attache of the Russian Embassy in Nigeria, as saying on Sunday.

Russia's diplomatic representation in the Nigerian capital of Abuja also told TASS that there were Russian crew members on board, but that none of them was arrested.

The aircraft took off in Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic, and was headed to the Chadian capital N'Djamena, Reuters reported, citing an unnamed security source. The aircraft allegedly contained two helicopters, a bulletproof jeep and boxes thought to contain military hardware.

The plane had to make an emergency landing in Kano, because the N'Djamena airport was closed, according to the source.

The Russian Embassy in Nigeria is currently working on technical formalities with Nigerian authorities for the aircraft to leave the country, TASS reported.

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