

Russia's Emergencies Ministry Sends Rescuers to Indonesia for AirAsia Flight 8501

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Indonesian rescuers carrying debris presumed to be from AirAsia flight 8501.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry has sent rescuers to Indonesia to assist in the recovery of AirAsia Flight 8501, which lost contact with air traffic control last Sunday.

So far, seven bodies have been recovered from an area off Borneo island, about 160 kilometers from the site where bodies were first spotted, though the plane itself has not been found. The plane was carrying 162 passengers at the time of the crash, the cause of which is still undetermined.

"By the decision of the Russian government and at the request of the Indonesian side, the Emergency Situations Ministry is sending a group of rescuers to lend assistance in conducting search efforts in the area where the Malaysian Airbus crashed," Alexander Drobyshevsky, a spokesman for Russia's emergencies ministry, was cited as saying Thursday

by the Interfax news agency.

Two planes were dispatched carrying 72 rescuers, as well as high-tech equipment including a remotely operated machine capable of searching underwater at depths of up to 1,000 meters, Drobyshevsky was quoted saying.

Rescuers have been racing against the clock to recover the bodies of victims of the crash, as wind and heavy rain is expected to seriously hamper efforts.

Many of the victims' family members have remained at the Surabaya airport, from which the plane took off, since news broke that the plane had disappeared.

Rescuers in Indonesia have said it could take a week to locate the flight's black box flight recorders and establish the cause of the crash.

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