

Russia Grounds 2nd Fighter Jet Fleet Amid String of Catastrophes

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Su-24 fighter jet

Russia's Defense Ministry has grounded its fleet of Su-24 fighter-bombers after one crashed Monday in the latest in a string of military aviation accidents.

The Su-24 aircraft crashed outside of Khabarovsk in Russia's Far East while trying to take off during training exercises, news agency Interfax cited a Defense Ministry statement as saying.

Both pilots were killed in the crash, which an unidentified government source attributed to engine failure, news agency RIA Novosti reported.

As is routine practice in the wake of a military aircraft crash, the head of Russia's Air Force, Colonel General Viktor Bondarev, has grounded all Su-24 aircraft, Interfax reported.

The Su-24 crash is the fifth loss of a Russian air force plane during routine training in the past month, and the second loss of an Su-24 this year.

On Friday, a MiG-29 fighter jet crashed during training near Krasnodar in southern Russia, prompting the Defense Ministry to ground Russia's fleet of over 200 MiG-29 aircraft. A month earlier, on June 4, another MiG-29 crashed during training.

Two and a half hours after that crash, a Sukhoi Su-34 fighter-bomber flipped over and crashed while trying to land in the Voronezh region, about 500 kilometers south of Moscow.

A few days after the Su-34 crash, a much larger Russian Tu-95 "Bear" strategic bomber ran off a runway at the Ukrainka bomber base in the far eastern Amur region after an engine caught fire during takeoff. One pilot was killed and another was hospitalized.

The Tu-95 fleet, which the Kremlin has used to prod EU airspace amid worsening relations with the West over the Ukraine crisis, was temporarily grounded.

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