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Russia Says Sinai Crash Was a Terrorist Act

By The Moscow Times

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A flower is seen near debris at the crash site of a Russian airliner in al-Hasanah area in El Arish city, north Egypt, Nov. 1, 2015.

An examination of the downed Airbus A321 wreckage and passengers' belongings has found traces of explosives, the head of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) Alexander Bortnikov said, the Kremlin press service reported Tuesday.

"One can definitely say that this was a terrorist act," Bortnikov said at the official meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

According to the FSB's experts, a homemade bomb with a capacity of up to 1 kilogram of TNT equivalent was on board the plane, Bortnikov said.

Putin said that the Russia's military aviation operations in Syria must be expanded, “so that criminals realize that retribution is inevitable,” according to the transcript provided on the Kremlin press website.

“We will find the terrorists anywhere on earth and punish them,” Putin said.

On Oct. 31, a Kogalymavia aircraft traveling from Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh to St. Petersburg crashed in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, killing all 224 people on board.

Up to 70,000 Russians were estimated to be in Egypt when the Russian passenger plane crashed. Following a recommendation from the FSB, Russia banned all the flights to Egypt and began an evacuation operation.

Speculating on the causes of the crash started soon after the catastrophe with international media, politicians and law enforcement agency representatives declaring the plane crash a terrorist act.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov had previously declined to comment on any statements related to the crash due to "an abundance of false information" and "hoaxes."

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