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Investigators Confirm Egypt Plane Crash as Terrorist Attack — Report

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An Egyptian military helicopter flies over debris from a Russian airliner which crashed at the Hassana area in Arish city, north Egypt, Nov. 1, 2015. **Mohamed Abd El Ghany / Reuters**

International investigators have confirmed that the Russian passenger jet which crashed over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula was downed by a bomb, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday.

Metrojet Flight 9268, which was traveling from Egypt's Sharm el-Sheikh to St. Petersburg's Pulkovo Airport, crashed on Oct. 31, 2015, killing all 224 people on board.

An investigation, conducted by an international team of aviation experts, found that an explosion originating in the plane's

oversized baggage compartment ripped through the fuselage 22 minutes after take-off, Kommersant reported, citing a source close to the investigation.

A small bomb, equipped with a timer and a barometer, was triggered as the plane climbed to just over 10,000 meters. The explosion caused the tail of the plane to come away, sending the aircraft into a sudden nosedive. The majority of passengers died in the air from the sudden change in air pressure, Kommersant reported.

The head of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), Alexander Bortnikov, announced in November 2015 that traces of explosives had been found on the downed Airbus A321 wreckage and passengers' belongings.

FSB experts believed that a homemade bomb capable of bringing down the plane would have needed explosive power equivalent to 1 kilogram of TNT, Bortnikov said.

Russian President Putin linked the attack to Russia's expanding role in the Syrian conflict, declaring, "we will find the terrorists anywhere on earth and punish them."

The Islamic State terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the attack on the day of the crash, later publishing alleged pictures of the bomb in their group magazine.

Egyptian officials were initially quick to deny a terrorist link, dismissing Islamic State claims as "propaganda." Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi later admitted in February 2016 that a bomb had brought down the aircraft, claiming that those responsible had wanted to target Russian-Egyptian relations.

The Kremlin banned all flights between Russia and Egypt in the wake of the attack, citing safety concerns. Travel links have not been restored, despite offers from the Egyptian authorities to build a new terminal for Russian planes.

The Islamic State is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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