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Russia Suspends All Tu-154 Flights Pending Crash Investigation

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Marina Lystseva / TASS

Russia has suspended all flights of Tu-154 aircraft pending an investigation into the Black Sea plane crash that killed 92 people on Sunday.

The suspension affects only flights carried out by law enforcement and the military, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday, citing an unidentified "source familiar with the situation."

"Only the Defense Ministry has these planes now, and they will have to decide whether to continue using them or not," Alexander Neradko, head of the Federal Air Transporation Agency (Rosaviatsia), said earlier this week. The Tu-154 is no longer used in civil aviation, he added.

The suspension of Tu-154 flights will not impact the air transport service, as only a small number of these planes are currently in use, Interfax reported.

Sunday's crash of a Defense Ministry Tu-154 passenger plane traveling to Syria sent shockwaves across Russia.

The plane was carrying military personnel, journalists, and musicians due to perform a New Year's concert for Russian troops at the Hmeimim air base in Syria's Latakia province. All 92 passengers – including 64 members of the iconic Alexandrov Ensemble and the prominent humanitarian Elizaveta Glinka – are presumed dead.

Read more about Elizaveta Glinka and her legacy

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As of Tuesday, a massive rescue mission and investigation continues. So far investigators have largely ruled out a terrorist attack as a possible cause of the crash. The main scenarios currently under investigation are technical failure and pilot error.

Read more about what could have caused the plane crash

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