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Russia Cites Technical Fault in Tu-154 Plane Crash

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A crane carries a fragment of a Tu-154 plane engine lifted by divers on a ship just outside Sochi, Russia.
Rossiya One TV Channel photo via AP

Minister of Transport Maxim Sokolov said a technical fault most likely caused the crash of a Ministry of Defense Tu-154 airliner that killed all 92 people on board.

"Obviously the equipment was working abnormally," Sokolov said in an interview with the Prime news agency.

"The reason for this will be established by experts who have set up a special technical commission," he added.

According to the Ministry of Defense's data, there was no technical error on the aircraft. However, they do not exclude the possibility of a mechanical failure leading to the crash. According to the Ministry of Defense, the pilot of the plane announced an emergency situation prior to the crash.

Transport Minister Sokolov also confirmed on Thursday that the main phase of the search operation at the crash site has been completed. Search operations continue, but an examination to determine the cause of the crash can now be carried out based on the quantity of material found.

Preliminary examinations will start in January 2017. The Ministry of Health also reported that the identification of the crash victims may take up to four weeks. Deciphering the plane's black boxes will take at least ten days, according to the Ministry of Defense.

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