

Poland Accuses Russian Air Traffic Controllers of 'Deliberately Provoking' Deadly Smolensk Plane Crash

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In this April 13, 2010 file photo, emergency ministry workers stand near the wreckage at the site of the plane crash that killed Polish President Lech Kaczynski in Smolensk, western Russia. **Mikhail Metzel / AP**

Polish prosecutors have accused two Russian air traffic controllers of “deliberately provoking” the fatal plane crash which [killed former Polish President Lech Kaczynski in 2010](#).

Marek Pasioneck, deputy head of the National Public Prosecutor's Office, said that new evidence uncovered during a government investigation had led to new charges against the two men, as well as a third person inside the flight control tower at the time of the crash.

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Ninety-six people died during the disaster at Russia's Smolensk airport, including the former president, his wife, and a number of top Polish officials. Poland's ruling Law and Justice party has long maintained that the disaster was the result of foul play, but previous threats of criminal charges have centered on negligence.

An official Russian investigation into the crash linked the disaster to adverse weather conditions at Smolensk airport, and the crew's decision to land amid heavy fog. “[The crash] has already been seriously investigated,” Presidential Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told the Interfax news agency. “We simply can't agree with these kind of conclusions.”

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