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Deadly TU-154 Christmas Day Plane Crash Caused by Human Error, Says Russian Defence Ministry

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Candles are placed around a photo of the crashed Tu-154 in memory of victims of the crashed plane in the center of Sochi, Russia, Dec. 25, 2016. **Viktor Klyushin / AP**

The December 25 plane crash which killed 92 people, including members of Russia's renowned Red Army Choir, was caused by human error, a new report has found.

In a statement released on Thursday, the Russian Defence Ministry said that the crash was caused by "pilot disorientation," the TASS news agency reported.

An investigative committee made up Defence and Transport Ministry officials, as well as experts from the aircraft's manufacturer, found no evidence of "external factors" which could have influenced the crash, such as overloading or problems fuelling before launch.

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Reports

The TU-154 airplane lost radar contact two minutes after take-off from Sochi airport on Christmas Day 2017. All 8 crew members and 84 passengers were killed when the plane crashed into the Black Sea.

The flight had been bound for Russia's Hmeymim airbase in Syria, where 64 members of the Red Army Choir were due to perform at New Year's concert.

Russian servicemen and journalists from NTV, Channel One and Zvezda were also onboard the plane at the time of the crash.

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