

## Moscow Cancels Maslenitsa Festivities, Declares Day of Mourning After Plane Crash

February 12, 2018



## Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS

Moscow authorities have canceled traditional festivities that mark the last week before Lent following Sunday's deadly plane crash outside the Russian capital.

Authorities declared Feb. 12 a day of mourning for all 71 victims of the An-148 Saratov Airlines plane crash. The regional passenger jet <u>went</u> down four minutes after takeoff from Moscow's Domodedovo Airport on Sunday afternoon. Feb. 12 also marks the start of Maslenitsa, a traditional Russian folk festival with pagan roots that celebrates the end of winter and the beginning of spring, known as Pancake Week.

Moscow City Hall <u>announced</u> on its website that Maslenitsa festivities would be canceled for Monday in respect for the victims of the deadly crash.

The tragedy has led to state-controlled television networks to take down entertainment

programming, the state-run TASS news agency  $\underline{\text{reported}}$  Sunday, citing Channel One and NTV.

Investigators are <u>pursuing</u> several leads that may have caused the crash, including bad weather, human error and poor maintenance of the plane.

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