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Captain's Last Words Before Deadly Plane Crash Near Moscow Released

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Interstate Aviation Committee (IAC) / Moskva News Agency

The captain aboard the ill-fated airliner that crashed outside Moscow last month scrambled to tell his co-pilot to gain altitude instead of tilting the plane to the ground, according to newly released cockpit voice recordings.

Saratov Airlines Flight 703 plummeted in the Moscow region minutes after departing from Domodedovo Airport on Feb. 11, killing all 71 passengers and crew. Investigators said at the time that the An-148 jet crash had been caused by switched off pressure measurement equipment led to different speed readings on the pilots' displays.

Related article: Plane Crashes Outside Moscow, 71 Believed Dead

Cockpit recordings transcribed and published by the RBC business outlet on Tuesday reveal the harrowing last conversation between captain Valery Gubanov and co-pilot Sergei Gambaryan.

“I understood you wanted to [...] but instead you’re going down,” Gubanov is cited as saying while the plane’s warning system alerts the pilots to “compare speed.”

“Why are you going down?! Where?! [...] Altitude! Altitude! Altitude! [...] Up!” Gubanov implores as the warning system warns “Terrain ahead! PULL UP!”

The recording cuts off after the captain is heard saying “that’s it, we’re ******.”

RBC confirmed the authenticity of the recording with sources at the Federal Air Transportation Agency and the Interstate Aviation Committee.

According to the 78.ru website, co-pilot Gambaryan forgot to turn on the plane’s pressure measurement equipment and panicked at the last moment. The outlet described the unfolding events in the cockpit as “a painfully typical situation.”

“Everyone already understands everything, but they believe in a miracle until the last moment,” the outlet writes.

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