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Errant ‘Russian-Made’ Rocket From Syria Hits Cyprus

By Reuters

July 01, 2019



Petros Karadjias / AP / TASS

An errant missile of possible Russian origin struck Cyprus early on Monday in what authorities described as a spillover from strikes between Israel and Syria.

The explosion on the ethnically split island occurred some 20 kilometers northeast of the Cypriot capital of Nicosia and did not result in casualties. An Israeli airstrike was underway against Syria at the time, and Syrian state media said its country’s air defenses had fired in response.

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"Based on our initial assessment, it is the remains of a missile which is known as S-200 in the Russian system," Kudret Ozersay, the Turkish Cypriot foreign minister, told a news

conference.

The aging S-200 is a surface-to-air missile which analysts said could have a range of up to 400 kilometers.

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It is one of the precursors of the S-400, the missile system Turkey plans to buy from Russia and which has rattled relations with Washington.

Residents told Cypriot media they saw a light in the sky then three loud explosions were heard for miles around, which many initially thought was a plane crash.

The freak incident was the first time that Cyprus, split in a Turkish invasion in 1974 triggered by a brief Greek-inspired coup, has been caught in the crosshairs of military operations in the Middle East despite its proximity.

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