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3 Russian Soldiers Killed in Supersonic Bomber Accident

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The Tu-22M3's crew members were killed when the emergency ejection system malfunctioned, state news agencies said. **Marina Lystseva / TASS**

Three Russian soldiers have died in a supersonic bomber accident at a military airfield near Moscow, state media reported Tuesday.

Russia's Defense Ministry confirmed the deaths of three soldiers as a result of the Tupolev Tu-22M3 incident at the Shaykovka air base in the Kaluga region, the TASS news agency said.

"An ejection seat went off when the engines started on the ground. Three people were killed, including the captain who was sitting in the instructor's seat," TASS quoted an unnamed regional security source as saying. The source added that a fourth crew member survived.

The local emergency service said there were no civilian casualties.

The Defense Ministry said it has launched an investigation into the cause of the accident.

An unnamed source familiar with the incident told RIA Novosti that it does not qualify as an

air crash because it took place on the ground.

In 2019, three crew members were killed when another Tu-22M3 crashed in a snow squall in northwestern Russia's Murmansk region.

The Tupolev Tu-22M3 long-range bomber was developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, with dozens still in operation in modern-day Russia. The planes were designed to destroy land and sea targets with guided missiles and are able to carry nuclear weapons.

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