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5 Girl Basketball Players Killed in Russian Road Crash

By AFP

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The minibus was carrying a girls team aged 12 to 14. **GIBDD of the Interior Ministry of Russia / TASS**

Five girls were killed Friday when a truck overturned on a highway in southern Russia and crushed a minibus carrying their basketball team to a tournament, officials said.

The team was going from the city of Volgograd to a tournament in Cherkessk when the accident happened.

"It is very difficult to write about this [...] five children died," the governor of the southern Stavropol region Vladimir Vladimirov said, adding that nine other people were hospitalized.

"This is real and piercing pain."

The TASS news agency cited the health ministry in Stavropol as saying that the nine hospitalized people were also children.

Footage posted on Telegram news channel Baza showed the truck lying on its side near a dark blue minibus with its left side crushed and the windows shattered on the right.

TASS quoted the head of Stavropol's traffic police, Alexei Safonov, as saying that a car violated road rules, causing the truck to swerve and topple.

Baza said the minibus was carrying a girls team aged 12 to 14, while the Telegram news channel Mash released a photo of 13 girls posing in a basketball gym clad in yellow and blue uniforms.

The head of the southern republic of Karachayevo-Cherkessia where the tournament was set to take place announced that it would be canceled.

Road accidents are common in Russia due to the poor state of roads and failure to observe traffic rules.

But the number of road deaths has decreased in recent years to around 20,000 a year.

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