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Advanced MiG-29 Fighter Crashes in Southern Russia, Killing Pilot – Reports

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The MiG-29 fighter jet. **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

An advanced Mikoyan MiG-29 fighter jet has crashed in southern Russia, killing its pilot, in the second military aircraft accident this week, media reported late Wednesday, citing the Defense Ministry.

The upgraded MiG-29SMT was not carrying an arms load when it crashed in a deserted area of the Astrakhan region that borders the Caspian Sea, the Defense Ministry's Southern Military District was quoted as saying.

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"The plane crashed due to equipment failure," Interfax quoted an unnamed source as saying.

"The pilot was killed," they added.

According to the Southern Military District, the MiG-29SMT was carrying out a training flight at the Ashuluk firing range. The Ren-TV broadcaster reported that the single-seat fighter crashed immediately after takeoff.

An Aerospace Forces commission was sent to the scene of the incident.

The MiG-29SMT is an upgraded MiG-29M variant, developed in 2005, with a redesigned airframe and an electronic flight control system.

Once Cold War icons, MiG aircraft have been plagued by reputational setbacks amid embarrassing incidents and failure to secure key export contracts after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The MiG-29SMT crashed 36 hours after a prototype of the Ilyushin Il-112V military transport plane crashed during a test flight at an airfield outside Moscow, killing all three crew on board.

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