

Russian Helicopter Looted at Kabul Airport – Airline

August 25, 2021



Unidentified individuals looted the Mil Mi-8MTV helicopter two days after Kabul fell to the Taliban and the Afghan government fled the country. utair.ru

A Russian transport helicopter was looted at the Kabul airport during the chaotic scramble to flee Taliban militants following the group's sudden takeover of Afghanistan, the aircraft's operator UTair confirmed to The Moscow Times on Wednesday.

Unidentified individuals boarded the Mil Mi-8MTV helicopter on Aug. 17, two days after Kabul fell to the Taliban and the Afghan government fled the country, said Natalya Melekhova, a spokesperson for Russia's third-largest airline UTair.

“They opened a container with airborne rescue equipment, which contained tools and unopened food supplies. The inner lining was also damaged. Our engineering staff put things back in order on board and performed the work necessary to guarantee safe departure,” Melekhova said.

She added that the helicopter and all UTair personnel were moved to a secure location on Aug.

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The Russian Telegram channel Baza had [reported](#) earlier Wednesday that unknown individuals stole the Mi-8MTV helicopter’s oxygen masks, bulletproof vests and portable radio station as well as its emergency axe, fire extinguishers and documentation.

“The robbers stole everything they could carry,” the outlet wrote on its Telegram social media channel. “Even the flight attendant’s seat headrest was stolen.”

The Telegram channel did not indicate whether the Mi-8MTV helicopters were part of the evacuation aircraft that the Russian Defense Ministry had earlier [announced](#) it would deploy to evacuate 500 people from Russia and other former Soviet countries.

UTair’s website states that its fleet consists of 56 Mi-8MTVs which are capable of carrying up to 4 tons of cargo and passengers.

Baza, which is believed to have ties to the Russian security services, reported on the looting after Ukraine’s deputy foreign minister said two of its evacuation aircraft had been hijacked at the Kabul airport. The ministry spokesman later denied that the hijackings took place, though Ukrainian media reported, citing unnamed sources, that wealthy Shiite passengers had bribed pilots to reroute the evacuation flight from Ukraine to Iran.

Russia has said it would [provide](#) civil aircraft to evacuate anyone who wishes to leave “to any foreign countries that show interest in receiving and accommodating them.”

The Taliban is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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