

Ukraine Detains 2 Over Destruction of World's Largest Plane

By [AFP](#)

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The destroyed An-225 plane at Hostomel Airport near Kyiv. **Oleksii Samsonov / KCSA (CC BY 4.0)**

Ukraine's SBU security service said Friday it has detained two former aerospace officials over the destruction of the world's largest plane, the Antonov-225 cargo plane, soon after the Russian invasion.

With an 88-meter (290 feet) wingspan, the unique Antonov An-225 plane named "Mriya," which means "dream" in Ukrainian, was destroyed last year during attacks on the Hostomel Airport near Kyiv, where it was parked in a hangar.

The airport saw fierce fighting soon after the start of the invasion on Feb. 24, 2022, as Russia attempted to seize the hub and use it to airlift armaments to Kyiv.

The Mriya plane was destroyed in the first days of Moscow's invasion. It had been used to fly in medical equipment from China during the pandemic in 2020.

The SBU accuses top officials at Antonov defense company, the plane's manufacturer, of preventing Ukrainian forces from protecting the airfield ahead of the invasion.

"According to the investigation, on the eve of the full-scale invasion, the officials did not allow the National Guard of Ukraine to enter the territory of the Hostomel airport to prepare for its defense," the SBU said in a statement.

The SBU said Antonov officials in January and February banned the Ukrainian military from building defensive fortifications on the airfield and barred them from entry.

A former deputy director general of Antonov state enterprise "is currently hiding from justice," the SBU said, while the two other accused — the ex-director general and head of the aviation security unit — have been detained.

They face up to 15 years in prison if convicted on a charge of obstructing the lawful activity of Ukraine's armed forces.

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