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17 Bodies Found After Helicopter Crashes in Far East Russia's Kamchatka

By AFP

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Site of the helicopter crash in Kamchatka. **Emergency Situations Ministry / Telegram**

Rescuers on Sunday said they found 17 bodies after a helicopter with 22 people on board crashed in Russia's Kamchatka peninsula in the Far East.

The helicopter went missing shortly after takeoff Saturday, carrying 19 tourists and 3 crew members, according to authorities in Kamchatka, a picturesque region popular among adventure tourists and known for its active volcanoes.

Rescuers spotted the remains of the helicopter on Sunday morning in a hilly area around 900 meters (2,953 feet) in altitude, Kamchatka region Governor Vladimir Solodov said in a video posted on Telegram.

Aerial footage released by Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry showed helicopter debris lying on a slope near the top of a large, wooded hill. The ministry said the aircraft was found

close to the location where it disappeared from radar tracking.

Embed:

"At this moment we have already found 17 bodies," said Ivan Lemikhov, an Emergency Situations Ministry official. "The rescuers have set up camp and the search has been put off until daybreak."

The helicopter that crashed was operated by the Kamchatka-based company Vityaz-Aero, which organizes flights for tourists, according to officials.

Accidents involving planes and helicopters are common in Russia's Far East, which is sparsely populated and where some areas are accessible only by helicopter.

In August 2021, a Mi-8 helicopter with 16 people on board, including 13 tourists, crashed into a lake in Kamchatka due to poor visibility, killing eight.

Later that same year, a plane crashed as it came to land on the peninsula, with 22 passengers and six crew aboard, all of whom were killed.

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