

Russian Missile Shot Down Azerbaijani Passenger Plane – Reports

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Kazakhstan's EMERCOM / TASS

A Russian surface-to-air missile was responsible for the crash of Azerbaijan Airlines Flight 8432, which killed 38 passengers, Azerbaijani media [reported](#) Thursday.

Unnamed Azerbaijani officials cited by the Baku-based news agency AnewZ said preliminary findings suggest the missile was fired from a Russian Pantsir-S air defense system as the plane approached Grozny in the North Caucasus republic of Chechnya on Wednesday morning.

GPS jamming, previously [reported](#) by Flight Radar 24, caused the aircraft to lose communication with air traffic control while flying over Russian territory, the officials added.

Chechnya and surrounding North Caucasus regions were targeted by drone strikes early Wednesday. AnewZ said that, under such conditions, Russian authorities were required to close airspace to civilian aircraft, but for unknown reasons, this was not done.

Kadyrov Grozny International Airport initially blamed the plane's rerouting over the Caspian Sea on thick fog. After regaining communication, the plane reappeared on radar at a low altitude before it eventually went down in western Kazakhstan.

Russia's civil aviation authority Rosaviatsia claimed the crash was due to a bird strike. However, aviation experts have raised doubts about that version of events as video footage of the crash showed maneuvering problems consistent with hydraulic failure, rather than the engine issues typically caused by bird strikes.

AnewZ reported that the plane was denied permission to land at airports in Grozny and nearby regions after it was fired upon by air defense systems. It subsequently attempted to divert to western Kazakhstan before crashing near the city of Aktau, an oil and gas hub.

Azerbaijan Airlines said there were 62 passengers and five crew members on board. Kazakh officials, who are also investigating the causes of the crash, said 38 people had been killed and there were 29 survivors, including three children.

A video circulated online Wednesday showed the downed plane's tailfin riddled with holes, leading to suspicions that the aircraft was struck by anti-air systems.

Related article: [38 Killed After Azerbaijan Airlines Plane Crashes in Kazakhstan](#)

Kazakh Senate speaker Maulen Ashimbayev condemned "speculation" surrounding the crash, arguing that it was "impossible" to determine the cause of the air disaster at this stage, the state-run news agency TASS reported.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov echoed Ashimbayev's comments on Thursday, saying that "we need to wait for the investigation to conclude."

A plane carrying nine injured Russian citizens who were on board Flight 8432 arrived in the Moscow region on Thursday, emergency officials said.

AFP contributed reporting.

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