

Russia Says It Wasn't Granted Access to Debris From Azerbaijani Plane Crash

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Wreckage of Azerbaijan Airlines Flight 8243. [Social media](#)

Russian civil aviation authorities [said](#) Wednesday that they have not been granted access to the “foreign objects” that damaged an Azerbaijani jet before it crashed in Kazakhstan last month.

Kazakhstan’s Transportation Ministry on Tuesday [published](#) preliminary findings of its investigation into the crash of Azerbaijan Airlines Flight 8243. Investigators released photos of what they said were “foreign metal objects” recovered from the wreckage.

The Azerbaijani passenger plane was flying from Baku to Grozny on Dec. 25 when it disappeared from radar near Russia’s Caspian Sea coast. The plane later reappeared and crashed near the Kazakh city of Aktau, killing 38 of the 67 people on board.

Kazakhstan’s 53-page report did not specify what caused the damage to the aircraft.

However, an anonymous Azerbaijani government source [told](#) Reuters that international

experts had identified a fragment of a Russian Pantsir-S air defense system among the recovered debris.

Related article: [Azerbaijani Plane Headed for Russia Likely Damaged By 'External Objects' Before Crash – Probe](#)

Russia's civil aviation authority Rosaviatsia reiterated Wednesday that Kazakhstan's report does not determine the origin of the recovered objects or the cause of the crash.

"Russia has not yet had such an opportunity since it has not been given these objects for examination," the agency said in a statement.

Rosaviatsia, which initially suggested the flight crew requested an emergency landing due to a "bird strike," said Kazakhstan's report confirms that "it was the AZAL pilots who transmitted this information to the Russian operators."

The agency also said the report confirms that the flight crew chose to divert to Aktau, even though two Russian airports near Grozny were "technically ready" to receive the damaged aircraft.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly said Russian air defenses accidentally fired at the plane from the ground.

Russia has acknowledged that its air defense forces were responding to a Ukrainian drone attack on the day of the crash but has denied responsibility for the incident.

Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a rare apology to Aliyev for the "tragic incident" but stopped short of accepting blame.

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