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Defense Ministry Found Liable for Deadly Fighter Jet Crash in Krasnodar Region

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The crash site of the Su-34 fighter-bomber in the town of Yeysk. **Erik Romanenko / TASS**

A judge in the southern Krasnodar region has found the Russian Defense Ministry liable for damages stemming from a military jet crash in October 2022 that killed 16 people, the Kommersant business newspaper reported Wednesday.

The case was brought by the relatives of an elderly woman who died when a Su-34 fighter-bomber slammed into an apartment building in the port town of Yeysk on Oct. 17, 2022.

The family had sued both the Defense Ministry and the United Strategic Command of the Eastern Military District, seeking compensation for damages and moral harm, according to the Kommersant newspaper.

A local court in Yeysk partly upheld the family's claims last year but excluded the Defense Ministry as a defendant.

The Krasnodar Regional Court has now reversed that decision, ruling that the ministry bears

“secondary liability” because it controls and funds its subordinate military structures. Under that designation, the ministry must pay compensation if the Eastern Military District does not.

Kommersant’s report did not mention the amount the elderly woman’s family had sought.

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In a separate case, a Yeysk court in September reportedly awarded 500,000 rubles ($6,500) each to a mother and her daughter who were injured in the crash. That amount was said to be half of what they had sought.

At least six families had initially sought compensation of up to 12 million rubles ($131,000) each from the Defense Ministry.

A criminal probe into the crash was closed after investigators determined that a flock of seagulls was sucked into both of the Su-34’s engines, causing the aircraft to lose control and crash.

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