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At Least 30 Dead After Russian Military Transport Plane Crashes in Annexed Crimea

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An Antonov An-26 transport plane. **Dmitry Terekhov (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

A Russian military transport plane crashed in the annexed Crimean peninsula on Tuesday night, killing 30 people on board, state media reported, citing the Defense Ministry.

The Antonov An-26 aircraft was carrying 23 passengers and seven crew members when it lost contact with air traffic control around 6 p.m. local time.

Russia's Defense Ministry said the crash was likely caused by a "technical malfunction."

The ministry said the Antonov An-26 was performing a scheduled flight and that there was no sign the aircraft had come under fire.

Anonymous sources told TASS that the plane crashed into a cliff.

The Investigative Committee, Russia's top investigative body, said Monday it launched a

criminal probe into possible safety violations.

It said the plane crashed in an area around 25 kilometers (15.5 miles) east of the southern port city of Sevastopol.

The An-26 is a twin-engined turboprop aircraft designed and produced in the U.S.S.R. from 1969 to 1985.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

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