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Russia Agrees to Pay Damages for Azerbaijan Plane Crash That Killed 38

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The site of the Azerbaijan Airlines plane crash in western Kazakhstan on Dec. 25, 2024. **Kazakhstan's EMERCOM / TASS**

Russia and Azerbaijan have reached a compensation agreement nearly 16 months after a Russian missile mistakenly downed an Azerbaijani passenger jet, both countries said Wednesday.

The settlement appears to be part of efforts to resolve a diplomatic crisis that erupted in December 2024, when an Azerbaijan Airlines flight traveling from Baku to Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, was fired upon by Russian air defense.

The plane eventually crashed in western Kazakhstan, killing 38 of the 62 people on board.

In a joint statement, the Russian and Azerbaijani foreign ministries said Wednesday that they reached an "appropriate settlement, including the payment of compensation."

The statement formally acknowledged that the crash was the result of an "unintentional

strike by an air defense system in Russian airspace."

Neither side disclosed the financial terms of the agreement.

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Russia initially sought to deflect responsibility for the crash, drawing a sharp rebuke from Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, who accused the authorities in Moscow of trying to obfuscate and hush up the air disaster.

The diplomatic impasse began to break in October after Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Aliyev and acknowledged for the first time that a Russian missile was responsible for the deadly crash.

Following Putin's admission, the Kremlin said Russia and Azerbaijan were working to "turn the page" in bilateral relations.

A technical investigation into the crash continues in Kazakhstan. Preliminary findings showed that the plane was struck by "elements of a warhead," though the report stopped short of naming the specific origin of the fragments.

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