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Tu-22M3 Strategic Bomber Crashes During Training Flight in Irkutsk Region

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A Tupolev Tu-22M3 strategic bomber. **Max071086 (CC BY-SA 3.0)**

A Russian strategic bomber crashed during a training flight in Siberia's Irkutsk region, the Interfax news agency reported Monday, citing Russia's Defense Ministry.

A video shared by outlets with links to Russia's security services captured the Tupolev Tu-22M3 bomber nosediving into the ground, followed by a thick plume of smoke rising from the site of the impact.

The aircraft was not carrying any warheads and was descending for landing when it crashed, the Defense Ministry was quoted as saying.

"The crew ejected," the Defense Ministry said, adding that the pilots were alive and well and that there was no damage on the ground.

Unverified reports suggested the crash occurred near the town of Svirsk, which lies around 50 kilometers (31 miles) northwest of the Belaya air force base.

Belaya hosts the 220th Heavy Bomber Aviation Regiment, which is made up of Tu-22M3 and Tu-95 bombers.

Last summer, Belaya was among five Russian airbases that came under attack during a vast Ukrainian drone operation dubbed Operation Spider Web.

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