RUSSIAN EMERGENCIES MINISTRY CONFIRMS ITS HELICOPTER'S CRASH IN MOSCOW REGION

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The Russian Emergencies Ministry has confirmed the crash of its helicopter in the Moscow region.

"A Mi-8 helicopter of the Russian Emergencies Ministry crashed during a training flight when the crew was drilling rescue operations in extremely difficult conditions in the Lubertsy district," the Russian Emergencies Ministry press service told TASS.

Three Russian Emergencies Ministry units put on alert

The Russian Emergencies Ministry has put three of its units on alert after the ministry's Mi-8 helicopter crashed in the Moscow region late on Wednesday.

"The main Emergencies Ministry department for the Moscow region; the ministry's central regional center and the Zhukovsky-based rescue aviation center have switched over to the emergency situation regime in the connection with the Mi-8 crash," the the ministry's central regional center told TASS.

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Three dead

A regional law enforcement source told TASS two pilots and a flight engineer were onboard.

"The crew's captain, Roman Frolov, the head of the Zhukovsky-based Emergencies Ministry rescue aviation center; his deputy pilot Dmitry Arsentyev and flight engineer Maxim Filippov," the source said adding that Frolov had been Arsentyev's instructor.

"They drilled rescue and monitoring operations in difficult weather conditions at night time," the source stressed.

The crew tried to take the vehicle away from highways and populated localities

The crew of the Russian Emergencies Ministry Mi-8 helicopter, which crashed in the Moscow region late on Wednesday could have tried to take the vehicle away from highways and populated localities when they understood that a technical breakdown might have occurred onboard, an aviation source told TASS.

"It looks as if the crew tried to lead the helicopter away from the populated localities. It fell down in the Tomilino forest park between the settlements of Mirnyi and Oktyabrsky - just one kilometer away from Oktyabrsky and 1.5 kilometers away from the Lytkarino highway," the source explained.

According to preliminary reports, there are no casualties or destruction on the ground. The crashed Mi-8 helicopter had been stationed at an air base in Zhukovsky near Moscow, which is a home to the Russian Emergencies Ministry aviation unit.

The accident occurred in the Lubertsy district of the Moscow region on Wednesday night. The fire at the crash site has been extinguished. The bodies of three crew members have been found. The Russian Investigation Committee has started a pre-trail investigation.

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