Russian jet with 92 aboard crashes into Black Sea

Moscow, December 25 (RHC)-- A Russian passenger plane with 92 people aboard, including a well-known military band, crashed into the Black Sea on its way to Syria on Sunday minutes after takeoff from the resort city of Sochi, the Defense Ministry said.

A total of 84 passengers and eight crew members were on board the plane when it dropped off of radars minutes after taking off in good weather. Emergency services found fragments about 1.5 kilometers from shore at a depth of 50 to 70 meters. The cause of the crash wasn't immediately known.

Crews from Channel One Russia, NTV, and Zvezda (the official media outlet of the Russian Defense Ministry), each with three members, were on board as well, the outlets confirmed.

Russian President Vladimir Putin released a statement on Sunday in which he expressed his sympathies with the families of those affected, and laid out steps for a formal inquiry. He also called for a national day of mourning on Monday.

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