Beat: Travel

Plane crash in eastern DR Congo kills 6, injures 3

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USPA News - At least six people were killed Monday when a passenger plane crashed in a residential area in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, a government spokesman said Tuesday, correcting earlier reports that more than 30 people had been killed. The accident happened on late Monday afternoon when a Fokker 50 aircraft was attempting to land at an airport in Goma, a city which borders the Rwandan city of Gisenyi.

The aircraft clipped a small building in a densely populated area of central Goma before crashing in a backyard. Goma`s mayor, Naasson Kubuya, initially told reporters that more than 30 people were believed to have died in the accident. But a government spokesman corrected those figures on Tuesday, saying only nine people were on board the aircraft and that six of them had been killed. It was unclear why authorities initially believed so many people had been killed. The six fatalities were identified as the plane`s captain, 46-year-old Russian citizen Alexander Bazhenov, four Congolese crew members, and a Congolese security guard. The three survivors, whose conditions were not immediately released, were said to be Congolese passengers. The Fokker 50, which can carry as many as 60 passengers and crew members, was owned by Congolese airline Compagnie Africaine d`Aviation (CAA). An airline official said the aircraft was carrying nine people and was flying from the town of Lodja in Sankuru District to Goma International Airport. The cause of Monday`s accident was not immediately known, but residents said it occurred during heavy rainfall. Aviation accidents occur regularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result, because of safety and security concerns, all airlines which are based in the African country have been banned from operating in the European Union (EU) and a number of other countries. In February 2012, a small plane carrying several Congolese government officials crashed while attempting to land at Kavumu Airport in the country`s east. A close aide to President Joseph Kabila, 48-year-old Augustin Katumba Mwanke, was among five people who were killed in the accident. And in July 2011, at least 75 people were killed when Hewa Bora Airways flight 952, a Boeing 727 carrying 112 people, crashed while attempting to land during bad weather at Bangoka International Airport in Kisangani, the capital of Tshopo province. It followed the crash of Hewa Bora Airways Flight 122 in Goma in April 2008, killing at least 40 people and injuring more than 100 others.

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