

Only external force could have broken apart crashed Russian airliner – owner

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*“It would be wrong to articulate any preliminary guesses or voice statements that are not based on anything,”* said Dmitry Peskov, the spokesman for the Russian president, on Monday. *“Let the investigators produce at least some results first.”*

The crew of Kolavia Flight 7K9268 was apparently disabled before the aircraft started its rapid descent and crashed in the Sinai Peninsula on Saturday, Viktor Yung, deputy director of the airline told the media on Monday.

*“As the catastrophic incident started to develop, the crew members were rendered completely incapable. This explains why they didn’t attempt to contact air traffic and report the incident happening on board,”* he said.

The airline doesn’t believe human error could have been the cause of the disaster either, citing the experience of its captain and other crewmembers.

*“We are certain that neither technical malfunction nor pilot error”* can be blamed for the disaster, Aleksandr Smirnov, who supervises the company’s fleet, said.

VIDEO: First look at site of Russian jet crash in Sinai (EXCLUSIVE) [#7K9268](http://on.rt.com/6v9c)



The company believes that serious structural damage by an external force may have caused the crash.

*“The only possible explanation is a mechanical force acting on the aircraft,” Smirnov said. “There is no combination of system failures that could have broken the plane apart in the air.”*

The company gave assurances that the crashed Airbus had passed all necessary tests, including a check for metal fatigue in 2014, an inspection that must be done every six years.

The head of the Russian aviation authority, Aleksand Neradko, said Kogalymavia’s statements are *“premature and not based on real facts.”*

*“There is much work to be done to study the debris of the aircraft and the data of the flight recorders,” he told Rossiya 24 news channel. “The debris is indeed spread over a large area indicating that the plane fell apart at a high altitude. But speculating on the cause is premature.”*

Flight [#7K9268](#): What we do and don’t know about Russia’s deadliest-ever air crash <http://on.rt.com/6v8w>



The airline Kogalymavia, which uses the brand name Metrojet, owns the Airbus A321 that crashed in Egypt just 20 minutes after it took off Sharm el-Sheikh International Airport. All 224 people on board died in the disaster, making it the deadliest incident of this kind in Russian aviation history.

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