

Flydubai leak: Outpouring of response from pilots as aviation groups keep mum (RT EXCLUSIVE)

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After exclusively obtaining the information, RT sent requests to numerous aviation authorities hoping to receive comments on revelations concerning the dangerously tight flight schedule Flydubai pilots are forced to follow, and specifically on the complaints of fatigue that may have led to the deadly plane crash.

Despite being singularly involved in the tragedy, Flydubai declined to elaborate beyond sending a general news release confirming the basic events that had took place and expressing its condolences to the families of the victims. Having failed to receive any response to the allegations made by whistleblowers within the company, RT moved to request more specific comments from Flydubai's management. Here's what we received: *"Thanks so much for your email but we have nothing to add to our statement, which we have provided to you which we believe cover the matters you raise."*

Read more [Five key things we learned from Flydubai whistleblower after FZ981 crash](#)

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When RT raised its concerns over Flydubai's practices with the Emirates' general civil aviation authority by phone, we were advised that they would look into our request, but would have a reply for us no earlier than late Wednesday afternoon.

RT also heard from Anthony Philbin, communications chief for the Secretary General of the International Civil Aviation Organization, who declined to comment on the matter due to the ongoing nature of the investigation, while referring RT to the Interstate Aviation Committee, which is conducting the probe, instead.

"This information should more appropriately be directed to the Interstate Aviation Committee, which is leading the investigation into Flight FZ981 as per the international standards established under Annex 13 (Accident Investigation) to the Chicago Convention. Until such time as the IAC provides official information to ICAO on its findings, inclusive of specific recommendations for our agency, it is not appropriate for us to comment on any matters relating to the potential causes or contributing factors of this event," Philbin wrote in an email to RT.

The Independent Pilot's Association replied to our inquiry by saying it was *"taking a pass"* on commenting. We also reached out to the Air Transportation Action Group, US National Transportation Safety Board, and the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which have all failed to respond so far.

In contrast to the muted response from official bodies, pilots working for regional air carriers have supported the leak with enthusiasm, with some sending their own accounts of alleged mismanagement. We are publishing all of their responses anonymously due to concerns for the pilots' career and safety.

[@RT.com](#) BREAKING: Pilots 'worked to death':Flydubai whistleblower says crash predicted (EXCLUSIVE) <http://on.rt.com/77nm>

Meanwhile, another former Flydubai pilot has come forth after the revelations about the exhausting rosters imposed by the company. In a letter to RT, he anonymously wrote that the statements made by his whistleblower colleague are "wholly accurate." He praised RT's report and expressed the hope that it would influence Flydubai to change its working practices.

"Well done. Perhaps it will bring about a much need[ed] change in Flydubai flight ops culture. Keep digging – there is more than you think," he wrote.

In a separate letter, the original Flydubai whistleblower pilot expressed gratitude for RT's reporting on the issue. "I can tell you right now that the aviation community around the world now has 100 percent full respect for Russia Today [RT] and I will always be thankful for this, and so will the families of the victims," he wrote.

On March 19, Flydubai flight FZ981 crashed in Rostov-on-Don, southern Russia, killing all 62 people on board. Following the tragedy, a whistleblower and former pilot came forward, claiming that the company's management forced the pilots to work while exhausted.

The whistleblower leaked the flight log of the co-captain of flight FZ981 Alejandro Cruz Alava, which shows that he worked 11 days with only one day off prior to the crash. He pointed out that Alava had been transferred from daytime to nighttime flights without being given enough time to adjust his sleep pattern.

'Investigators should take over fatigue allegations'

Documents obtained by RT about Flydubai pilots' numerous fatigue reports need be taken seriously and investigated, Dr Ian Charles Perry, physician and international aviation consultant, said in an interview to the channel.

"The documents show that pilots were not properly rested and this needs further investigation because that is very serious ... The reporting of the fatigue was not paid attention to. The rosters I've seen are also very wrong in a way of flight team management. To be on duty for nine out of 10 days is not correct," Perry said, adding that this is not the procedure employed by the majority of airlines.

"Information I've seen indicates this needs far more investigation because it might be implicated in the accident itself," Perry noted, referring to the Flydubai flight FZ981 crash.

Perry has been investigating pilot fatigue for many years and was able to describe the dangers of the phenomenon.

"Chronic fatigue goes on and on. Behavior becomes more erratic. You don't think clearly, you don't monitor instruments carefully. And you can miss many things."

[@RT.com](#) New CCTV footage offers insight into Flydubai FZ981 crash (VIDEO) <http://on.rt.com/77no>

Flydubai does not seem to have “*good management*,” Perry said, stressing that no one was paying attention to pilots’ complaints of feeling exhausted. “*In fact, pilots themselves, in one of the surveys, said they didn’t bother to complain because nobody would pay any attention to them.*”

Other airline industry insiders argued that this kind of packed schedule for pilots is not uncommon across other airlines.

“*The schedule, while not optimal, it is not that unusual. Pilot fatigue is the issue the industry has worked with for many years,*” said John Cox, CEO of Safety Operating Systems.

“*Being a pilot that is flying across many time zones is a tiring job. It is one the industry struggles to find a balance between: getting the schedules covered, but not having pilots that are too fatigued perform.*”

Pilot fatigue leads to “*cumulative sleep debt and it has a performance degradation impairment,*” Cox said, adding that many pilots suffer from it.

Cox also believes that it is important for the investigators for Flydubai flight FZ981 crash have access to pilots’ schedule.

However, he remained skeptical that pilot fatigue could be the sole reason behind the crash.

“*Accidents are never due to a single cause. I think investigators will certainly look at fatigue very carefully and the schedule that these pilots flew will be examined, but to say it was the cause – I don’t believe investigators will find it to be that simple. There may be other issues involved.*”
