

Event Date: 30 June 2009

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Yemenia Plane Crash, Indian Ocean

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| Type of Event: | Plane Crash |
| Date of Event: | 30/06/2009 |
| Location: | Indian Ocean |
| Number Killed: | 142 passengers and 11 crew were on board the flight |
| Damage Estimate: | - |
| Insured Loss Estimate: | - |
| Insured: | Yemenia |
| Carriers: | - |



Summary

A Yemenia plane carrying 153 passengers and crew on an international flight has crashed into the Indian Ocean as it approached its destination of the Comoros Islands in bad weather, according to airline officials. Reports said the aircraft was carrying 142 passengers and eleven crew members. The Airbus 310-300, operated by Yemenia, was flying the final leg of a flight taking passengers from Paris and Marseille to Comoros via Sanaa in Yemen. The plane was flying to Moroni, capital of Grande Comore, the main island of the archipelago and reports said the jet went down around 10 kilometres (6 miles) off Comoros. The Paris airports authority said 66 French nationals were on board the plane. Most of the passengers aboard the Airbus A310 were believed to be Comoros residents returning from Paris, reports said.

Flight IY626 left Sanaa in Yemen at 21:30 local time (18:30 UTC) on 29 June and contact was lost at around 01:50 on 30 June local time (22:50 UTC on 29 June). Reports say the plane was due in Moroni at about 02:30 local time (23:30 UTC). Most of the passengers had travelled to Sanaa from Paris or Marseille on a different aircraft. The Paris-Marseille-Yemen leg of the Yemenia flight was flown by an Airbus A330. In Sanaa, those passengers who were flying on to the Comoros changed onto a second Yemenia plane, the A310 that crashed.

Officials said the crash occurred as the plane approached Hahaya Airport in Moroni in stormy weather. Reports said winds of up to 115 kmph (70 mph) were recorded when the disaster happened. Officials told reporters that a reconnaissance spotted plane wreckage from the jet, an oil slick and bodies in the water a few kilometres from Moroni. A search operation is under way, with the French military assisting. Some bodies have been found and there are reports that a child survived the crash and has been rescued.

Airbus said the crashed plane was made in 1990 and had been operated by Yemenia since 1999. It had accumulated approximately 51,900 flight hours in some 17,300 flights, Airbus added. French Transport Minister Dominique Bussereau said numerous faults had been detected during inspections in France in 2007 on the Yemenia A310, and that it had not flown to France since. He added that the airline was being closely monitored by European Union authorities. Yemenia is 51% owned by the Yemeni government and 49% by the Saudi government. Its fleet includes two Airbus 330-200s, four Airbus 310-300s and four Boeing 737-800s.

This accident is the second air disaster involving large numbers of French citizens to occur this month. On 1 June, an Air France Airbus 330 travelling from Rio de Janeiro to Paris crashed into the Atlantic Ocean, killing all 228 people on board.

Sources: CNN News, BBC News, Associated Press, Agence France Presse, Reuters News

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