



PLANE MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING AFTER EXPLOSION TEARS GAPING HOLE IN ITS SIDE

News / Airlines



A passenger plane was forced to make an emergency landing in Somalia on Tuesday when an explosion shortly after takeoff tore a large, gaping hole in its fuselage.

Two people were hurt in the incident onboard the Djibouti-bound Daallo Airlines flight, officials told BBC News, which occurred at 10,000 feet over Mogadishu. Local reports also suggested that at least one man was blown out of the plane.

Mohamed Hassan, a police officer in nearby Balad town, said residents had found the dead body of an old man who might have fallen from a plane. Balad is an agricultural town about 18 miles north of Mogadishu.

A photo of the plane's exterior that was taken once it had landed shows the massive hole, just above the wing.

Awale Kullane, Somalia's ambassador to the United Nations, posted video he shot onboard the plane after the blast. It showed oxygen masks hanging overhead while wind rushes through the hole and into the plane's cabin. Passengers, some with their phones out, sit calmly.

"We just heard a loud noise and couldn't see anything but smoke for a few seconds, when visibility returned we realized quite a chunk of the plane missing," Kullane wrote of the incident.

Another of the plane's passengers Mohamed Ali told the Associated Press that they heard a bang before flames opened a gaping hole in the plane's side.

"I don't know if it was a bomb or an electric shock, but we heard a bang inside the plane," he said, adding he could not confirm reports that passengers had fallen from the plane.

"I think it was a bomb," said the Serbian pilot, Vladimir Vodopivec, who was quoted by Belgrade daily Blic. "Luckily, the flight controls were not damaged so I could return and land at the airport. Something like this has never happened in my flight career. We lost pressure in the cabin. Thank god it ended well," the 64-year-old pilot said.

Somali officials said the incident is under investigation and it wasn't yet clear what caused the blast. Initial reasons given ranged from fuselage failure to an oxygen tank that blew up. Foul play, while not initially suspected, may be to blame.

One source told CNN that initial tests of the damaged aircraft "came back positive for explosive residue."

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