

Beat: Miscellaneous

Senior officials among 7 dead in Iran plane crash

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USPA News - A small police aircraft crashed in southeastern Iran on Saturday night, killing all seven people on board, including three senior police officials, state-run news agencies reported on Sunday. A technical failure was said to have caused the deadly crash.

The accident happened at around 8 p.m. local time on Saturday when the Aero Commander aircraft disappeared from radar while flying from the eastern city of Birjand to Zahedan, the capital of Sistan and Baluchestan province. It was carrying a pilot, co-pilot, a flight attendant and four passengers. The wreckage of the aircraft was found several hours later in a mountainous area known as Sabzpoushan, which is close to Zahedan. There were no survivors. The state-run Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said three senior police officials were among those killed, including General Mahmoud Sadeqi who was in charge of investigations and a colonel whose name was not immediately released. The officers were en-route from Tehran to investigate the killings of four police officers in Sistan and Baluchestan province, IRNA reported. Qassem Rezaei, the commander of Iran's Border Guards, ruled out a terrorist attack but provided no other details about the possible cause of the crash. The Fars News Agency (FNA), citing an unidentified source familiar with the investigation, said the crash was caused by technical problems in combination with darkness and the pilot's unfamiliarity with the region. Iranian aircraft are frequently involved in accidents which the government has previously blamed on sanctions by the international community. The sanctions, mainly over the country's nuclear program, prevent airlines and the government from carrying out proper maintenance and buying spare parts for their planes. The last major crash in Iran happened in January 2011 when at least 77 people were killed after Iran Air Flight 277 crashed as it attempted to land at Urmia Airport in northwestern Iran. At least 26 people survived the accident, which occurred during severe weather conditions in the area.

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