

Beat: Miscellaneous

UN helicopter crashes in central Afghanistan, injuring staff

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USPA News - A helicopter belonging to the United Nations (UN) crashed Sunday afternoon in the central region of Afghanistan, injuring a number of UN employees, officials said on Monday. The crash is believed to have been caused by technical problems.

Nazifullah Salarzai, a spokesman for the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), said the accident happened on Sunday afternoon when the Russian-made helicopter went down in the Yakawolang district of Bamyan province, which is located in the central region of Afghanistan. He declined to say how many people were on board the aircraft, which he refused to identify but is believed to have been a Mil Mi-8 medium twin-turbine transport helicopter which is capable of carrying up to 27 passengers and crew members. It is not known where the helicopter was traveling to. Pajhwok Afghan News, a local news agency, cited Salarzai as saying that seven UN employees, including two foreigners and five Afghan nationals, were injured in the crash. But when reached by e-mail on Monday, he declined to say how many people were injured. "We have not provided anyone with figures because of security reasons," he said. The exact cause of Sunday's accident was not immediately known, but Salarzai said it was caused by unspecified technical problems. "During the flight the helicopter developed mechanical problems and the crew was forced to make an emergency landing," he said, without giving other details. "The cause of the incident is under investigation." On August 16, seven American service members and four Afghans were killed when a Black Hawk helicopter crashed in the Chinartu area of Shah Wali Kot district in Kandahar province. Taliban spokesman Qari Yousuf Ahmadi claimed responsibility for the crash, but a formal cause has not been made public yet.

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