

# Russian Pilot Among Helicopter Crew Captured by Taliban

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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KABUL — The Taliban have captured all the people, including a Russian pilot, aboard a helicopter that crashed in a volatile region of Afghanistan's east, a spokesman for the insurgency said Monday.

The helicopter, owned by air charter company Khorasan Cargo Airlines, made an emergency landing in Logar province late Sunday due to bad weather, a Khorasan staff member said on condition of anonymity.

"Mujahideen immediately surrounded the chopper, detained [the] foreigners aboard and completely destroyed the helicopter ... by setting it alight," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in an e-mailed statement.

Onboard the Russian-made Mi-8 helicopter were eight Turkish engineers and at least one Russian pilot, according to Turkish and Russian officials. There was also at least one Afghan

pilot aboard.

"The helicopter was carrying eight Turks, the pilots were Russian and Afghan. We believe they are in good health and Turkish officials are in contact with Afghan officials over the issue," Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman Levent Gumrukcu said.

Mujahid said nine Americans wearing military uniforms and two translators were onboard, though the Taliban routinely misstate the facts surrounding such incidents.

All onboard were captured alive, and they were being transferred to "the most secure region of the nation," Mujahid said, though he did not say where that was.

Helicopter crashes and "hard landings" occur relatively frequently in mountainous Afghanistan.

Khorasan offers troops and cargo transportation as well as medevac and civilian transportation services.

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