

Russian Bomber Crashes in 6th Military Aircraft Loss in One Month

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A Russian Tu-95 strategic bomber.

A Russian Tu-95 “Bear” strategic bomber crashed during routine training in Russia's Far East on Tuesday, news agency RIA Novosti reported, marking the second loss of a Tu-95 bomber and the sixth loss of a Russian military aircraft in a little over a month.

Russia's aging aircraft fleet has been called into heavy service over the past 18 months as relations with the West deteriorated over the crisis in Ukraine. The NATO military alliance has said it intercepted 400 Russian aircraft near its borders last year — a 50 percent increase over 2013.

The increased flight rate is taking a toll on Russia's fleets of MiG-29, Su-24 and Su-34 fighter jets, as well as the Tu-95 long-range bombers, all of which have experienced accidents since the beginning of June.

The Defense Ministry said the crew in Tuesday's crash managed to bail out of the aircraft before it went down, and that it was not loaded with weapons. The Tu-95 is capable of carrying nuclear bombs or cruise missiles.

An unidentified Defense Ministry source told RIA Novosti that the cause of the accident was "most likely a technical failure." The last Tu-95 crash in early June was the result of an engine fire during takeoff.

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