
In Khabarovsk, aircraft commander convicted who caused the crash of MI-8T helicopter in 2015, which resulted in death of five people



Evidence gathered by the Far Eastern Transport Investigations Directorate of the Investigative Committee of Russia was found sufficient by the court to issue an indictment for the commander of the aircraft crashed in Tugur-Chumikansky District of the Khabarovsk Territory. He was found guilty of committing an offense under Part 3 of Article 263 of the Criminal Code of Russia (violation of the rules for traffic safety and operation of the air transportation system that entailed the death by negligence of two or more persons, with large-scale damage).

To remind, on August 15, 2015, the Mi-8T helicopter operated by Vostok Airlines had been performing a commercial flight to take tourists to a recreation area on the route “Khabarovsk - Polina Osipenko landing site - Ongachan Bay” and in the opposite direction.

The helicopter had departed its position at 12.30 PM local time. There had been three crew members and 13 passengers on board. Once the aircraft had been refueled near Polina Osipenko District, the flight had proceeded in unfavorable weather conditions over the mountain surface of the island of Southern Tugur-Chumikansky District of Khabarovsk Territory and the water area of the Sea of Okhotsk. At 5.7 PM of the specified day, at a distance of 100 meters from the coastline of the

Tugursky Peninsula, the helicopter had entered the vortex mode, collided with the water surface, and sunk.

The accident had killed five passengers and caused a slight injury to another passenger. In addition, the unlawful actions of the aircraft commander had caused major damage to UTair Aviation, the helicopter owner, in the amount of more than 51 million rubles due to the complete loss and destruction of the aircraft.

The preliminary investigation included a significant number of investigative and other procedural activities. At the initial stage, the bodies of the deceased and their personal belongings were lifted from the water with the help of divers and inspected; the helicopter fuselage and its tail beam cut off by a screw were lifted from the bottom of the Sea of Okhotsk. The investigation was particularly difficult due to the need for a large number of forensic examinations, the aviation specifics of the crime, and the remote location of witnesses and victims.

According to the results of the investigation, it was established and proved that the accident had occurred through the fault of the aircraft commander, who had committed a number of violations of flight rules, namely - when the weather conditions had deteriorated, he had failed to make a timely decision to return to the airfield of departure, continuing the flight in poor visibility at an altitude below the minimum permissible (less than 100 meters above water), at a speed of up to 40 km/h. That is, the pilot had not ensured the safety of the aircraft, had not maintained safe altitudes and flight speeds. In addition, there had been no life jackets on board.

During the investigation, the defendant neither plead guilty nor repented. The investigation sent the criminal case with the approved indictment to the court back in 2016. Today, after almost three years, the court has sentenced the accused to two years of imprisonment in a settlement colony.

[Investigative activities on the crash site](#)

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