

# 20 killed in cash-packed military plane crash in Bolivia

[AFP](#) :: At least 20 people were killed when a Bolivian military cargo plane carrying banknotes crashed while landing near the capital city La Paz, police said Friday, as crowds attempted to loot the site.

The aircraft, a C-130 Hercules transport plane – manufactured by Lockheed Martin – veered off the runway at El Alto International Airport and crashed into an avenue, destroying multiple cars and damaging trucks, local media footage showed.

Mangled parts of the aircraft were seen on the road where the plane came down and bystanders could be seen rushing to grab the scattered cash prompting police to deploy tear gas to repel the hordes.

Authorities were later seen setting the money alight in a bonfire at the scene of the crash.

It was not immediately known what caused the crash but witnesses told AFP that the weather had been treacherous.

“A heavy hailstorm” was falling and “there was lightning” when the plane went down said Cristina Choque, a 60-year-old vendor whose car was struck by aircraft wreckage.

“The tire is what fell on top of us... my daughter is injured, she has a head wound,” she said.

The Ministry of Defense said it would launch an investigation into the crash.

Colonel Rene Tambo, head of the police homicide division in El Alto, told reporters late Friday that “there are about 20, maybe a few more,” casualties.

Colonel Pavel Tovar of the National Fire Department gave an earlier toll of “between 15 and 16 people” dead in the disaster.

“We are recovering the bodies of these people who have sadly suffered in the accident,” he said.

Bolivia’s health ministry reported that at least 28 people were injured.

– Money grab ‘a crime’ –

Fatalities were recorded both at the airport and on the busy avenue where the plane crashed and struck several vehicles.

The Bolivian Air Navigation and Airports authority NAABOL said in a statement that the C-130 Hercules had departed from the eastern city of Santa Cruz and crashed while landing at El Alto international airport, which has since suspended operations.

Advertisement

The defense ministry in a statement said that “the money transported in the crashed aircraft has no official serial number... therefore it has no legal or purchasing power.”

It said that “its collection, possession, or use constitutes a crime.”

Choque and her family remained inside their mangled vehicle for fear of the heaving crowd at the crash site.

The La Paz Prosecutor’s Office received reports of businesses that were also targeted by criminals taking advantage of the chaos.

“Twelve people have been arrested” for questioning, prosecutor Luis Carlos Torres told reporters.

Hospitals in El Alto also launched a blood donation campaign

to treat the injured.

La Paz, at an altitude of 3,650 meters (11,975 feet) and surrounded by Andean peaks, is the highest administrative capital in the world.

AFP